



# THE INDEPENDENT

No 3,269

SATURDAY 12 APRIL 1997

WEATHER: Mainly dry

(165p) 60p

What Walt Disney found in Lincolnshire the long weekend

New truths about David Hockney  
The Magazine

Staying in or going out: what's hot next week  
The eye

## How IRA plotted to switch off London

**Jason Bennett**  
Crime Correspondent

An IRA team planned an elaborate multiple bomb attack to knock out the electricity supply across London and substantial parts of the South-East for months, the Old Bailey heard yesterday. But the terrorist plot, which would have blacked out millions of homes and businesses, was foiled by a joint police and MI5 operation, members of the jury were told.

Thirty-seven explosive devices were recovered in police raids in which seven alleged members of an active terrorist unit, including a former US Marine, were arrested.

The IRA cell intended to blow up six electrical sub-stations last July as part of an elaborate scheme to bring chaos to the British mainland, the prosecution claimed. An eighth man was

Mr Sweeney said: "Had the conspiracy succeeded, it would have resulted in serious and widespread loss of electricity to London and the South-East."

"Supplies to consumers would have been affected over a considerable period," he said.

The jury heard that all the defendants, except Clive Brampton, are accused of being IRA members who came to London from the Republic with false identities and £24,000 in cash, which was used to rent a lock-up garage in Wimbledon, south-west London, and three safe houses, in Tooting and Peckham, in south London, and near Wandsworth, south-west London.

They researched their intended targets and reconnoitred at least five of the sub-stations. By crippling the six sub-stations, which channel almost all the electricity used in the London area and parts of Kent and Essex, the city's power would be knocked out for a considerable period. The sub-stations were named as Amersham Main, Buckinghamshire; Elstree, Hertfordshire; Watling Cross, in Hertfordshire; Rayleigh Main, in Essex; Canterbury North, in Kent and West Weybridge, in Surrey.

However, while the IRA men were carrying out their work, they were being secretly watched by officers from the Metropolitan Police, MI5, and the West Midlands Police, the court heard.

In the early hours of 15 July last year, Metropolitan police raided three premises London. At both the Tooting and Peckham addresses officers found "a mass of incriminating evidence", the jury was told. At a base in Peckham this included 37 part-made "time and power units", said Mr Sweeney. The only parts missing from the devices were the 2.5kg of Semtex explosives and detonators. Each unit could be set to explode up to 100 hours in advance.

Mr Sweeney said evidence recovered included fake identifications, large amounts of cash, maps and research about the electricity network.

To attack the sub-stations, he claimed the IRA cell had brought six pairs of extendable ladders, bolt cutters, and crow bars.

The prosecution will argue that Mr Gannon obtained a map of the electricity network from the annual Electricity Supply Handbook, which he took from Battersea public library in London. Mr Brampton was arrested in Birmingham by West Midlands police on the same day as the seven defendants in London.

The trial, which is expected to last up to eight weeks, continues on Monday.

**Supplies to consumers would have been affected over a considerable period, for months or more**

hired to provide fake identifications and find premises in the Birmingham area where a lorry could be safely unloaded, the court heard.

The trial is the first to involve alleged IRA action since the ceasefire was shattered by the Docklands bomb in east London in February 1996.

Donald Gannon, 33, Gerard Hanratty, 37, Martin Murphy, 38, Patrick Martin, 34, Robert Morrow, 36, Francis Rafferty, 44, and John Crawley, 39, all from Northern Ireland and the Irish Republic, and Clive Brampton, 36, from Birmingham, deny conspiring to cause explosions likely to endanger life or cause serious injury to property.

The court heard that Mr Crawley, an Irish-American, was a US Marine from 1975 until 1979. He was in a battalion which specialised in map reading and demolition, using explosives.

The alleged IRA team was able to get details about the sub-stations, which are owned by the National Grid Group, from a library book which included map of the system.

Nigel Sweeney, prosecuting, said the IRA unit had intended to carry out the co-ordinated attacks last summer.

### QUICKLY

**Hit-team green light**  
The hit-team whose Berlin murder has caused a rupture between Europe and Iran were acting under a "green light" from an Iranian Revolutionary Guard committee. Page 18

**Calvi answers in sight**  
For 15 years the mystery of the Italian banker Roberto Calvi's death has been left hanging much like his body found dangling from Blackfriars Bridge. At last, something approaching a final answer is at hand. Page 15

**Rapist schoolboy**  
A schoolboy was found guilty yesterday of taking part in the gang rape of an Austrian tourist who was attacked and then thrown naked into a canal to drown. Page 4

Willie Little Child, honorary chief of the Canadian Indians Cree tribe, came to London to see the Queen yesterday, writes Kathy Marks. Sixty, the Queen was busy, so he and other tribal elders staged a prayer

ceremony in traditional costume outside the gates of Buckingham Palace. The Indian and Inuit peoples of Canada are concerned about a possible European Union ban on the import of products made

from the fur of trapped animals. While international sentiment has turned against the fur trade, they argue that their communities are dependent on it.

The delegation had hoped to ask the

Queen to honour a treaty signed by Queen Victoria in 1906 in which she guaranteed the fur-trapping rights of Indigenous Canadian peoples.

Photograph: Nicola Kurtz

## Major writes a blank cheque to Eurosceptics

**Anthony Bevins**  
Political Editor

John Major yesterday offered Tory Ministers and candidates a blank cheque to oppose the European single currency, after he defended the right of a Minister to oppose the loss of sovereignty.

Angela Browning, an Agriculture Minister who has been in the thick of the BSE crisis, said in a campaign leaflet to the voters of Tiverton and Honiton that the euro would end the sovereignty of the nation state, and, as such, she would not support it.

She said the loss of sovereignty was threatened by a transfer of gold and currency reserves to the European Central Bank in Frankfurt.

But Mrs Browning pointed out that as the Conservative manifesto promised the Tories would not allow any further reduction in sovereignty, she was in step with party policy.

That remarkable view – a direct breach of the Government's wait-and-see line decided by Cabinet on 23 January – was then endorsed by Mr Major, who made light of it at his daily press conference.

However, he said only last month that ministers would not be allowed to

break the line, and Labour and the Liberal Democrats were quick to attack the Prime Minister's retreat.

Mr Major, who used his press conference to attack Tony Blair's "white flag" policy towards the Social Chapter and the Working Time Directive, said: "I expect ministers to support the Conservative manifesto..."

"If they didn't support what was in our manifesto, I do not believe they would have remained in the Government over the last few months."

As Mrs Browning pointed out in a BBC radio interview, the manifesto says not only that the Government would negotiate and then decide on single currency entry, but also that: "We will not accept other changes to the Treaty that would further centralise decision-making [or] reduce national sovereignty..."

More ominous for Mr Major was the silence of Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whose support for the 23 January wait-and-see agreement was critical in keeping the Conservative Party together.

Paddy Ashdown, leader of the Liberal Democrats, said last night: "If the Prime Minister fails to move against the defiance of the 'No Surrender' Tories, he will have effectively surrendered the leadership of his party to the Eurosceptics."

Last night, senior Tories said they feared that the Tory true could break apart – just as Labour's delicate pact over unilateral nuclear disarmament cracked open during the 1983 general election campaign.

## Scientists magnetised by levitating frog

**Charles Arthur**  
Science Editor

project to build a magnet strong enough to levitate a volunteer 100 metres.

"We tried it because we thought it would work," said Peter Main of Nottingham's physics department. "It was actually the idea of Andre Geim, of the University of Nijmegen. We had seen superconductors with magnets levitating above them. This is the same effect."

The frog was lifted by a magnetic field of 16 tesla, about a million times more powerful than the Earth's natural magnetic field, and about six times more powerful than that of Magnetic Resonance Imaging scanners used in hospitals.

The important issue is your density – the force you feel is related to your volume, so the less dense, the better," said Professor Main. "Frogs have a density about equal to water – as do people. It works because it actually distorts the electron orbits in the frog's atoms; that generates a tiny electric current, which generates a magnetic field in the opposite direction from the main magnet."

Lifting a human would require a magnet several metres across, though it would not have to produce a more intense magnetic field. "You would have to be lying down, rather than standing. It might cost about £1m."

There are serious applications too for the discovery: it could form a low-cost test bed for chemicals and systems which will be used in space. "It's a lot less expensive than sending a rocket up," said Professor Main.



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## news

## significant shorts

**Britain to dig in heels over over EU fishing-fleet cuts**

Britain will refuse to co-operate with plans to cut back the European Union's fishing fleets when fisheries ministers meet in Luxembourg on Monday, the Fisheries minister Tony Baldry said yesterday.

The Government's policy is to have nothing to do with the fleet cuts - seen as an essential way of reducing over-fishing - until "quota hopping" by foreign-owned and crewed boats ends. The quota hoppers, nearly all Spaniards or Dutch, have purchased British vessels and fishing licences giving them a right to a large part of the United Kingdom fish quota in the Channel and North Sea, and their catch is mostly landed overseas. Britain is expecting to be left isolated at the Council of Ministers meeting on Monday and Tuesday while the other fisheries ministers make progress on agreeing fleet cuts. The Government's view is that the quota hopping crisis can only be sorted out by changing the EU's founding Treaty in the Intergovernmental Conference talks, due to climax in Amsterdam in June.

Nicholas Schoon

**Man dies in gas explosion**

One person died and two others were taken to hospital yesterday, when an explosion ripped through a gas cylinder plant on an industrial estate.

Emergency services evacuated the south-west London business park and nearby housing estate after fire raged through the factory, owned by the British Oxygen Company. BOC Gases later identified the dead man as employee Anthony Mulry, 29, who was married and lived in Surrey. Bob Pirie, spokesman for the company, said the company "deeply regretted" his death. He added: "The explosion occurred during a routine gas cylinder filling process ... nothing like this has ever happened before. It was a freak occurrence."

Nicole Veash

**Face-to-face with terrorism**

A businesswoman told yesterday how she rushed to the aid of the police officer gunned down by the IRA and came face-to-face with the horror of terrorism.

Miriam Collins, 40, was in her office above Londonderry's courthouse when RUC constable Alice Collins (left, no relation) was shot in the back by an IRA sniper on Thursday. Together with police officers she tried to tend the injured woman's wounds. Miriam Collins said yesterday: "I am appalled that I have had to come face-to-face with evil."

"I was in my office upstairs when I heard the bang. I ran down and I saw Alice lying on the ground with one of her colleagues trying to assist her ... Alice neither moved nor spoke."

**£100,000 for nanny kept as slave**

A nanny who was treated as a slave by her employers was yesterday awarded £100,000 in High Court damages against the couple who fed her scraps and made her sleep outside like a dog.

Nigerian-born Helen Samuels was whipped with knotted electrical flex, beaten with high-heeled shoes and starved to a weight of six stone. Deputy Judge Nigel Wilkinson QC said she had been "treated as no human being should have been treated".

Her employers, Dr Truman Abassah and his wife Philomena, are back in Nigeria after they were deported half-way through five-year prison sentences imposed at Croydon Crown Court in 1991 for causing actual bodily harm. Ms Samuels, 30, lived with the Abassahs between 1985 and 1990 in Thamesmead, south-east London, and then in Bedfordsheath.

Kathy Marks

**Guerin murder suspect in court**

A man held by police investigating the murder of journalist Veronica Guerin appeared in court in Dublin yesterday on drugs-related charges.

The man, in his late fifties, was arrested together with a woman when he left a ferry from Holyhead, Anglesey, at the Co Dublin port of Dun Laoghaire. All but two of six people detained for questioning in connection with the murder in recent days - including the woman - were released early yesterday. Ms Guerin, an investigative crime reporter, was shot dead at the wheel of her car in Dublin last June. Police have questioned almost 150 people about the killing, but so far only one man has been charged with her murder.

## people



Sarah Napier found hanged in her room in Oxford. (Photo: PA)

**Tragic end for the student who promised success**

An Oxford University student has been found hanged in her lodgings. Sarah Napier, 22, was discovered hanging in her room by housemates at 1pm on Thursday. Police, who were called to investigate, said they were not treating the death as suspicious.

Ms Napier, who came from Edinburgh, was in her third year studying history at Lady Margaret Hall and was due to sit her final examinations in an week's time. Sir Brian Fall, her college principal, said there were "disturbing" signs. She was an "outstanding student" who had been immensely popular and always helpful.

A university spokeswoman said Ms Napier had been "experiencing difficulties" and had been in touch with the university's medical and counselling service.

It is the second time in recent years that the college has been hit by tragedy. In October 1992, Tracey Cole, 18, was found hanged in her room a week after arriving from her home in Exeter.

The principal of The Mary Erskine School, in Edinburgh, said: "Sarah was a courageous student who had planned to go to Harvard once she finished her degree."

Burglary which took place in the same room.

Police are investigating the death.

He added: "She had been in touch with us earlier this month."

Police said they were investigating the death.

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# Art is smart

Return to brush  
and palette in  
top prize shortlist

David Lister  
Arts News Editor

the lighthouse at Oxford Ness  
Suffolk, entitled *Lacuna*.

Ms Harris said of this entry:

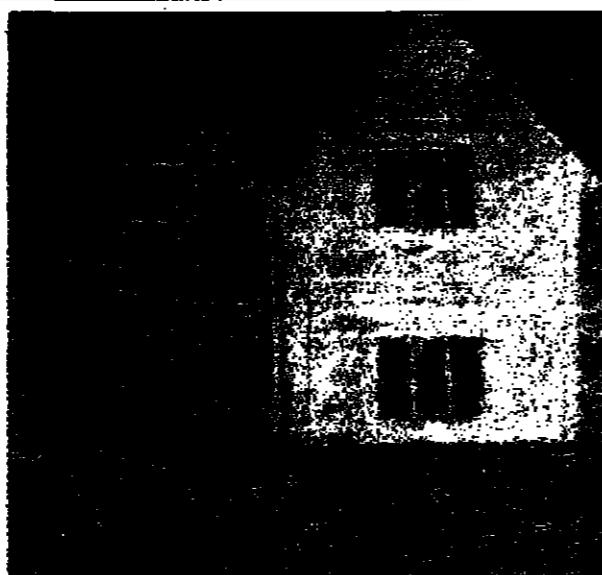
"Rather than coming from figuration to abstraction she seemed to be doing the other way round, working in abstraction but being figurative, partly due to the scale and partly due to the way she used the paint. She was doing something rather interesting ... figuration from an abstract point of view."

Rosie Snell, who studied at Loughborough College of Art and Design, said yesterday: "At college I was one of the very few doing painting. Most were doing conceptual works, making things out of wax. I think painting is coming back, but slowly, particularly representational painting which has been out of favour for a long time."

She added: "Damien Hirst is very clever in the way he hyped himself so well. I'd like to think the new generation is not so interested in hyping itself."

The NatWest Art Prize aims to encourage innovation and technical skills in composition, drawing and use of colour. The winner will be announced in May, and the works of all the shortlisted artists will be displayed at the NatWest Group's new Lombard Hall in the City of London this summer.

The full shortlist comprises: Judy Buxton, 35; Stephen Chambers, 35; Melanie Comber, 26; Jane Dixon, 33; Mark Francis, 34; Jeff Gibbons, 34; Mark Hammond, 29; Simon Lewis, 31; Jason Martin, 26; Max Maccrop, 34; and Rosie Snell, 25.



Government's hidden treasures: Top, Herbert Arnould Olivier's *Where Belgium Greeted Britain, December 4th 1914* (1915) and above, Spencer Gore's *Harold Gilman's House at Letchworth* (1912).



*Lux Aeterna*, by Rosie Snell, 25, one of the 11 shortlisted entries for this year's NatWest Art Prize

## A small speck in the sky; a giant find for insurance man

Charles Arthur  
Science Editor

To Stephen Laurie, the tiny speck in the sky 100 million light years away meant big news. For years away meant big news. For the amateur astronomer realised, as he monitored his computer-controlled telescope, that he had discovered a supernova, or exploding star, in the constellation Draco.

When he did, just before midnight last Monday, he immediately sent an electronic message to the International Astronomical Union in Harvard, which confirmed by the morning that he was the first in the world to spot it, beating the professionals and becoming only the second Briton ever to discover such an event.

Mr Laurie, 38, an actuary of Church Stretton, Shropshire, had spent just six weeks using the £3,500 10in telescope on his patio, linked to a £2,000 device which contains photoelectric sensors capable of picking up

I was lucky to find a supernova so quickly. It's a bit like winning the lottery.

light far fainter than the human eye can discern. That data was passed for processing to a computer inside, then to another computer, which compared the images with those taken earlier. And in one, there was a significantly brighter spot - the supernova.

"It's known as a 1A type - a double star system in which they

orbit each other, and the bigger star had accreted more mass from the smaller one." Then the star reached a critical mass and exploded into light. Supernovae are rare and unpredictable: professional astronomers have been known to spend 20 years looking for them without success.

Mr Laurie, a keen astronomer since getting his first telescope at 12, had to hide his excitement in order not to disturb his wife, Angela, who was asleep. "I didn't wake her up, but told her the next morning," he said. "I was very lucky to find a supernova so quickly. It's a bit like winning the lottery."

But his patience has paid off before: he has already discovered 50 asteroids.

He was inspired to hunt supernovae after fellow amateur Mark Armstrong became the first British astronomer - amateur or professional - to discover an exploding star last October.

## ... but one treasure trove is still hidden

David Lister

The Government has revealed for the first time its full holding of 20th-century art masterpieces which adorn ministers' office walls and embassies around the world.

Artists including Lowry, Sickert, Stanley Spencer, Patrick Heron, Patrick Caulfield, Howard Hodgkin and Barbara Hepworth are among the dozens of well-known names that the Government has been buying to place at ministers' and ambassadors' disposal.

Yesterday, at a reception at 10 Downing Street, the De-

partment of National Heritage celebrated the publication of the first catalogue listing all the 20th-century pictures and sculptures the Government owns. The catalogue took 15 years to compile, and thousands more earlier works are still to be documented. It lists over 2,000 works by almost 1,000 artists, though it does not say in which embassy or ministry they reside.

But although members of the public are allowed access by law to individual works of art bought by the Government, the paintings will remain off limits to all but a few.

A DNH spokesman said yes-

terday: "I'm afraid you can't just ring up and say you would like to see a particular painting in 10 Downing Street. A member of the public would have to prove an academic interest in a particular artist to be allowed to see a painting in a government building."

Many in the art world have been unaware of the exact nature of the holdings. Dr Wendy Baron, who retires this week as director of the collection, admitted: "It has been strange to see references to paintings as, for example, a Paul Nash saying 'whereabouts unknown' when I knew it was in the collection."

### IN TOMORROW'S INDEPENDENT

Five sections for the very best in news, features, sport, business, travel, property, and money



#### TOBACCO WARS

Why cigarette companies are facing a fight to the death in the US courts

PLUS:

#### THE DANGERS OF COHABITATION

Can living together damage your marriage?

#### WHITER SHADE OF PALE

Why British black women are lightening their skin

NO HIDING PLACE

How forensic scientists can now pin-point one person in 50 million

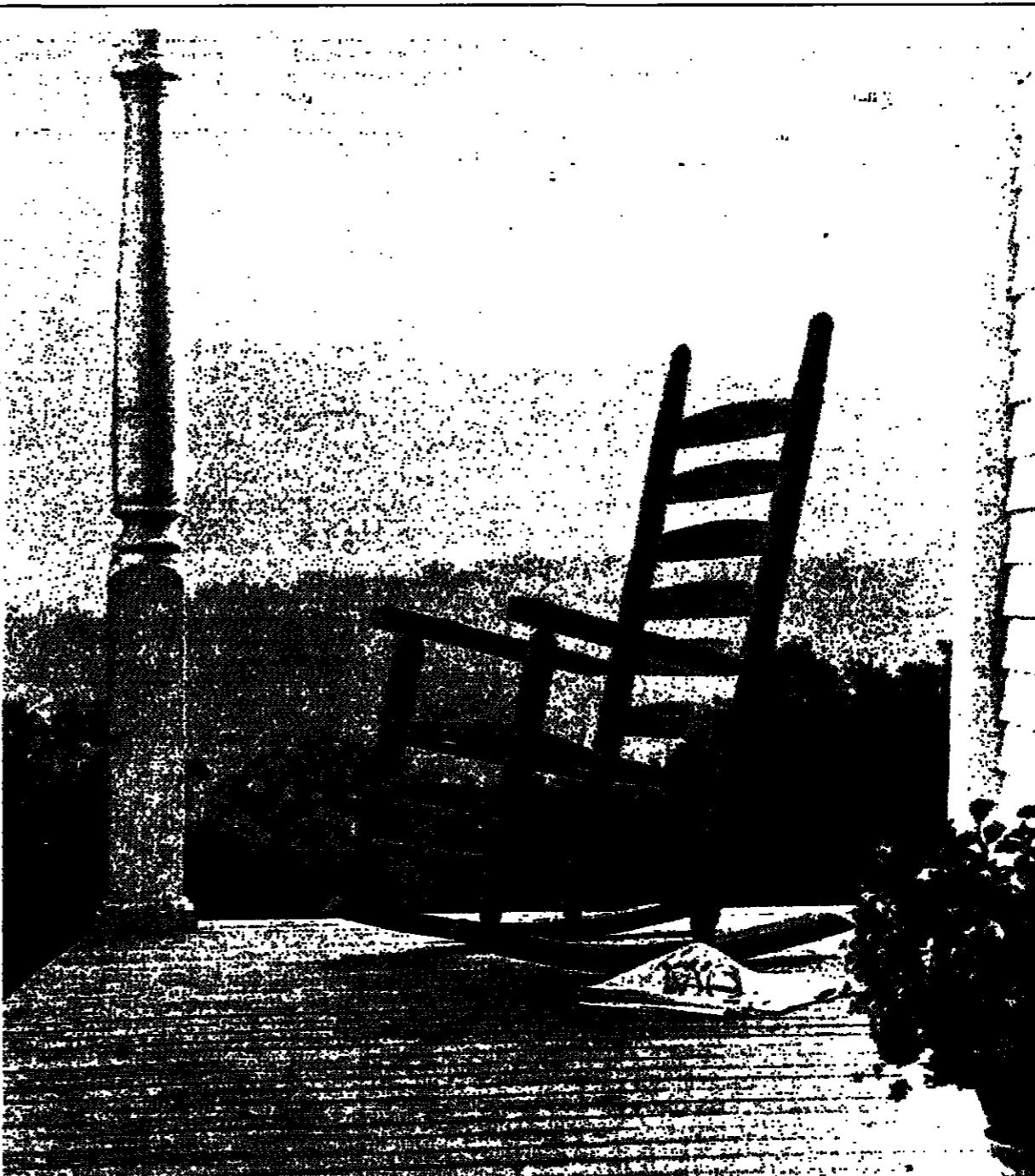
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Full seven-day terrestrial and satellite TV listings

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JACK DANIEL'S TENNESSEE WHISKEY



Convicted rapist: The 15-year-old boy, who is just 4ft 11ins tall

# Schoolboy guilty of tourist's gang-rape

Louise Jury

A schoolboy was found guilty yesterday of taking part in the gang rape of an Austrian tourist who was attacked and then thrown naked, into a canal to drown.

The boy, now aged 15, was the only member of a gang of eight teenagers to deny the horrifying attack in which the woman was repeatedly raped and subjected to "sexual indignities" while members of the gang hurled racist abuse at her.

But an Old Bailey jury rejected his claims that he had merely watched the others and taken no part himself. He will be sentenced later.

The court was told how the pack of youths, aged between 14 and 17, approached the 33-year-old woman after she went for a midnight stroll from her hotel in the King's Cross area of London in Sep-

## Woman who left hotel for stroll was raped and left to drown

tember last year. She was not worried because she thought they were children. But John Bevan QC, for the prosecution, said the boys dragged her to a secluded area where they could attack her.

"After her clothing had been torn off, she was violently and repeatedly raped by each one in turn," he told the court. One of the boys made her perform a sex act and "threatened to kill her if she bit him in the process".

She was then asked whether she could swim. She lied and said she could not, whereupon they threw her into the Regent's Canal.

There were repeated references to the "white bitch" during the attack which Mr Be-

van said was "overtly racist in nature".

The schoolboy admitted throwing her street guide and some of her clothes into her water on the orders of the six 21ins 14-year-old ring-leader.

The woman, who has two-year-old son and a four-year-old daughter, gave evidence through an interpreter.

She spoke calmly and quietly and cried for the first time since her ordeal only after leaving the witness box.

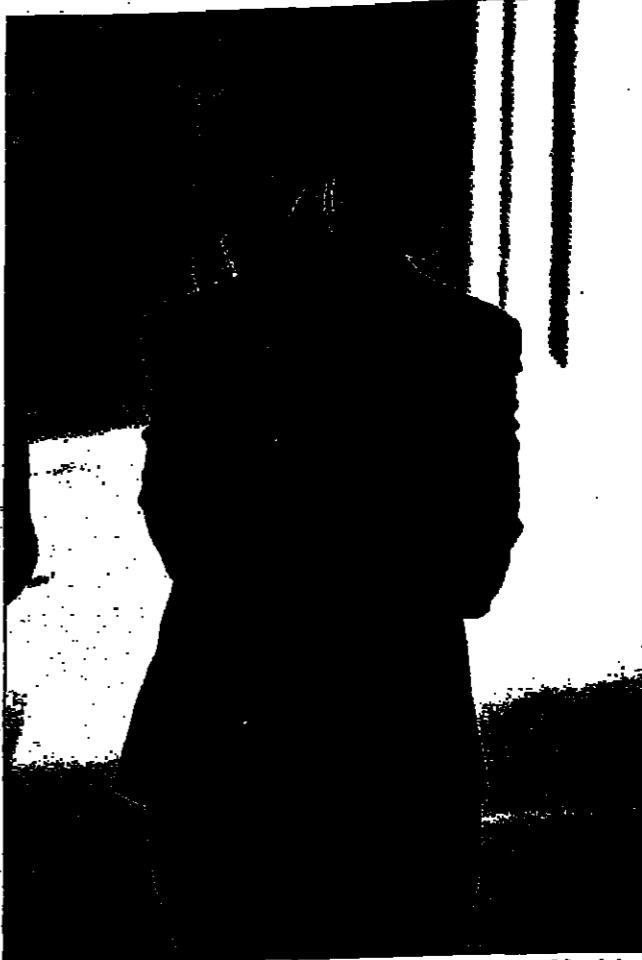
Mr Bevan said: "During

these rapes, the reason that she survived as she did seems to be that she, in her own words, separated her mind from her body as much as she could - a remarkable achievement, you may think, in the circum-

stances." The only time her composure came close to slipping in court was when she was asked to look at photographs of her young attackers. Although the thought clearly pained her, she said she would if it helped the court.

The 15-year-old youth, who is just 4ft 11ins tall, said he had been "scared" when he realised what was happening to her and said it was "quite terrible". He admitted he had been prepared to lie to police when interviewed to protect his brother, but denied telling lies to the court about his own involvement.

The boy was remanded into the care of the local authority to return to court for sentence next Friday, when six of the others will also be sentenced, after reports have been prepared. The 14-year-old "ring-leader" will be sentenced later.



The victim: "Survived attack by separating mind and body"

**COMET PRICE INDEX**

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1000 spin 1600 wash load

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£299.99 ... SAVE £100.00

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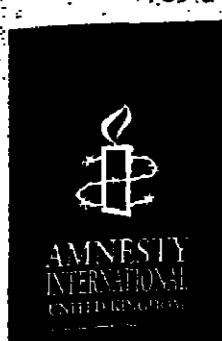
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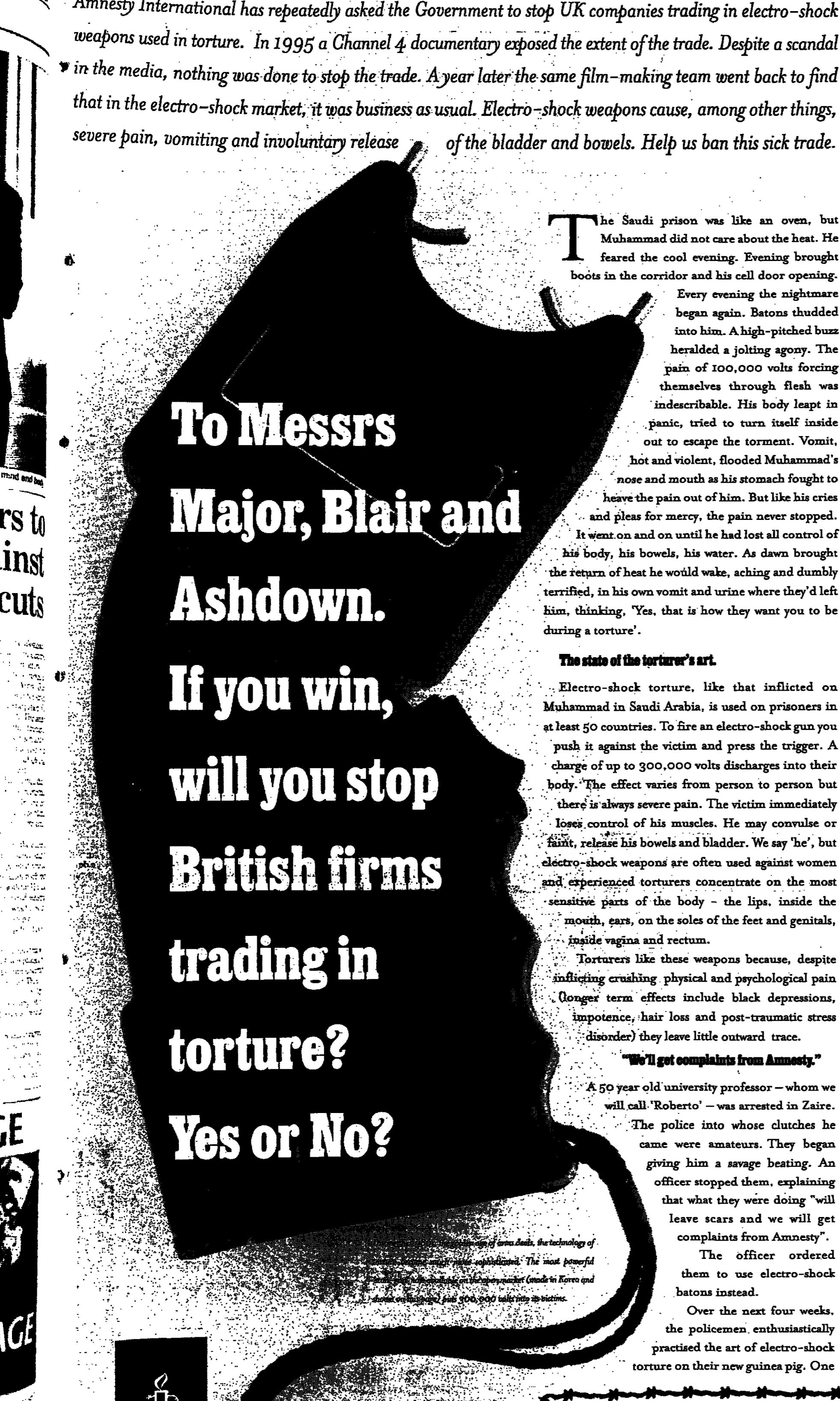
WHIRLPOOL ARTICL 500

Amnesty International has repeatedly asked the Government to stop UK companies trading in electro-shock weapons used in torture. In 1995 a Channel 4 documentary exposed the extent of the trade. Despite a scandal in the media, nothing was done to stop the trade. A year later the same film-making team went back to find that in the electro-shock market, it was business as usual. Electro-shock weapons cause, among other things, severe pain, vomiting and involuntary release of the bladder and bowels. Help us ban this sick trade.

To Messrs  
Major, Blair and  
Ashdown.  
If you win,  
will you stop  
British firms  
trading in  
torture?  
Yes or No?



Amnesty International  
working worldwide  
for the release of  
prisoners of conscience,  
fair trials for political  
prisoners and an end  
to torture, extra  
judicial executions,  
"disappearances"  
and the death penalty.



The Saudi prison was like an oven, but Muhammad did not care about the heat. He feared the cool evening. Evening brought boots in the corridor and his cell door opening.

Every evening the nightmare began again. Batons thudded into him. A high-pitched buzz heralded a jolting agony. The pain of 100,000 volts forcing themselves through flesh was indescribable. His body leapt in panic, tried to turn itself inside out to escape the torment. Vomit, hot and violent, flooded Muhammad's nose and mouth as his stomach fought to heave the pain out of him. But like his cries and pleas for mercy, the pain never stopped.

It went on and on until he had lost all control of his body, his bowels, his water. As dawn brought the return of heat he would wake, aching and dumbly terrified, in his own vomit and urine where they'd left him, thinking, 'Yes, that is how they want you to be during a torture'.

#### The state of the torturer's art

Electro-shock torture, like that inflicted on Muhammad in Saudi Arabia, is used on prisoners in at least 50 countries. To fire an electro-shock gun you push it against the victim and press the trigger. A charge of up to 300,000 volts discharges into their body. The effect varies from person to person but there is always severe pain. The victim immediately loses control of his muscles. He may convulse or faint, release his bowels and bladder. We say 'he', but electro-shock weapons are often used against women and experienced torturers concentrate on the most sensitive parts of the body - the lips, inside the mouth, ears, on the soles of the feet and genitals, inside vagina and rectum.

Torturers like these weapons because, despite inflicting crushing physical and psychological pain (longer term effects include black depressions, impotence, hair loss and post-traumatic stress disorder) they leave little outward trace.

#### "We'll get complaints from Amnesty."

A 50 year old university professor - whom we will call 'Roberto' - was arrested in Zaire.

The police into whose clutches he came were amateurs. They began giving him a savage beating. An officer stopped them, explaining that what they were doing "will leave scars and we will get complaints from Amnesty".

The officer ordered them to use electro-shock batons instead.

Over the next four weeks, the policemen enthusiastically practised the art of electro-shock torture on their new guinea pig. One

of the lessons they learned was that when they fired the weapon against his neck or genitals, Roberto vomited, lost control of his bowels and blacked out. They must have enjoyed this, for they did it over and over again.

#### The Channel 4 Dispatches' scandal

Since 1990, Amnesty International has identified more than 100 companies which have offered electro-shock weapons for sale. These weapons are illegal in Britain. It is an offence to possess them, much less to sell or manufacture them, but in 1995, Channel 4's Dispatches programme showed secretly shot film of a representative of Royal Ordnance, part of British Aerospace, eagerly bidding to supply large quantities of electro-shock batons to a supposed Middle Eastern customer. The exposé caused a stink but, ironically, the only person threatened with arrest by police was Channel 4's reporter Martyn Gregory himself. A year later, Dispatches demonstrated that it was business as usual in the electroshock trade. British firms simply brokered deals through third countries, an order being shipped, say, from a factory in Mexico directly to a client in Africa. Since the weapons never touched British soil, the deals were not technically illegal. No-one seems to be in a hurry to close this loophole.

#### The law is fugged

There is a fug in current laws which encourages companies to be, to quote the celebrated phrase of an ex-Minister, 'economical with the actualité' about dubious exports. Cargos can be disguised by all sorts of euphemisms. A 300,000 volt stun-gum becomes 'a voltage meter'. Governments bend their own rules. The US Government did not ask American firms to obtain export licences for electro-shock batons sent to NATO allies Greece or Turkey, despite evidence that both use these weapons for torture.

Mediha Curabaz, a nurse, fell foul of Turkey's brutal police by refusing to sign a false statement. They gave her electric-shocks to her fingers, nipples and vagina. Mediha said, "they thrust the electric truncheon violently into my sexual organs and I felt a pain as if I was being drilled there with an electric drill. I started bleeding and fainted."

#### A challenge to the political leaders

Amnesty International wants governments to stop the export of electro-shock weapons to countries known routinely to torture. We want laws to plug the loopholes. More than a year after the Scott Report called for a fundamental review of controls on UK arms exports, this Government has failed to act. Will the Government elected on May 1st be any different?

Amnesty International asks John Major, Tony Blair and Paddy Ashdown to answer, clearly and unambiguously, the question: "If your party wins will you take the necessary effective action to stop British companies seeking to profit by selling electro-shock weapons to countries which torture? Yes or no?"

#### Don't wait till May 1st, cast your vote now.

Roberto said after his electro-shock torture, "This type of weapon is really immoral, because the people who make it for torture don't test it on their own bodies and don't know the pain it causes. They make other people suffer simply to make money. It is very sad."

If you agree with Roberto that it is immoral to profit from selling weapons used to torture people, please help us ram this home to the politicians.

Whichever way you vote on May 1st, you can register your determination to stop the electro-shock trade - and demonstrate your commitment to basic human rights - by filling in the coupon here and now and joining us or making a donation.

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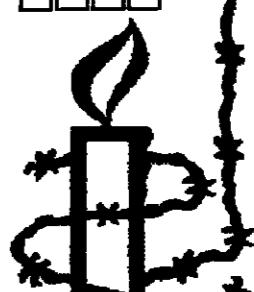
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**AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL**

H48





# 250,000 places at risk from college cuts

**LUCY WARD**  
Education Correspondent

Up to 250,000 students will be denied places at sixth-form and further-education colleges next year as budgets are slashed by £15m. Details of grants for the next academic year show the first year-on-year cut in government funding for further education for over a decade.

The cutbacks will come as a severe blow to the further-education sector, which has met tough government-imposed targets and expanded student numbers by over 15 per cent since 1993 while slashing costs.

Among the victims will be A-level students, whose course hours will be cut, and the unemployed, who will not be able to afford tuition fees colleges could be forced to impose.

The cuts represent a reduction of 125,000 part-time student places (or fewer full-time places) compared with this year. Colleges will also have to abandon plans for an expansion equivalent to 125,000 more part-time places in 1997-8.

Almost nine out of ten colleges face a funding cut in September; some of more than a tenth of their budget, according

to the Further Education Funding Council, the quango which funds colleges. Further-education leaders yesterday predicted the cuts would prove disastrous for colleges, with those worst-hit facing merger or even closure.

Sixth-form colleges, some of which produce league-table-topping A-level results, are among the chief victims of the cuts, with specialist colleges teaching art and design and agriculture also badly affected.

John Brennan, further-education development director at the Association of Colleges, said they were being driven near breaking-point. To absorb the cuts, principals faced having to make large-scale redundancies, and some would be forced to close down costly courses such as engineering or construction altogether.

He added: "Colleges will also have to drive down costs by reducing class-contact time, especially for full-time students, and expanding class sizes. Students who possibly need more support than most will not get the same learning inputs that they have in the past and that they would probably still get in schools."

## Siamese girl twins 'healthy'

Siamese twins have been born at a hospital in Manchester, it emerged yesterday. The girls, who are joined at the abdomen, were born at St Mary's hospital earlier this week.

It is the second successful delivery of conjoined twins at the hospital in two years. The girls were delivered by Caesarean section and are doing well, medical chiefs said.

It is not yet known whether surgeons will carry out an operation to separate the girls.

In September 1995, Chloe and Nicole Astbury were born at St Mary's - the first Siamese twins in Britain for 10 years. They were joined from the breastbone to the navel and shared a liver but died just over a month later.

About 60 per cent of Siamese twins, which occur about once in 100,000 births, are stillborn.

The mother was under the care of St Mary's hospital's top team of consultants, which was involved in delivering the Astbury twins in 1995.

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Reputations in the balance at jugglers' get together



Jugglers practising yesterday for the 10th British Juggling Convention, which opened at Nottingham University on Thursday and will run until Sunday. Around 1,500 jugglers, unicyclists, stiltwalkers and circus acts are expected to attend the event.

Photograph: Doug Marke

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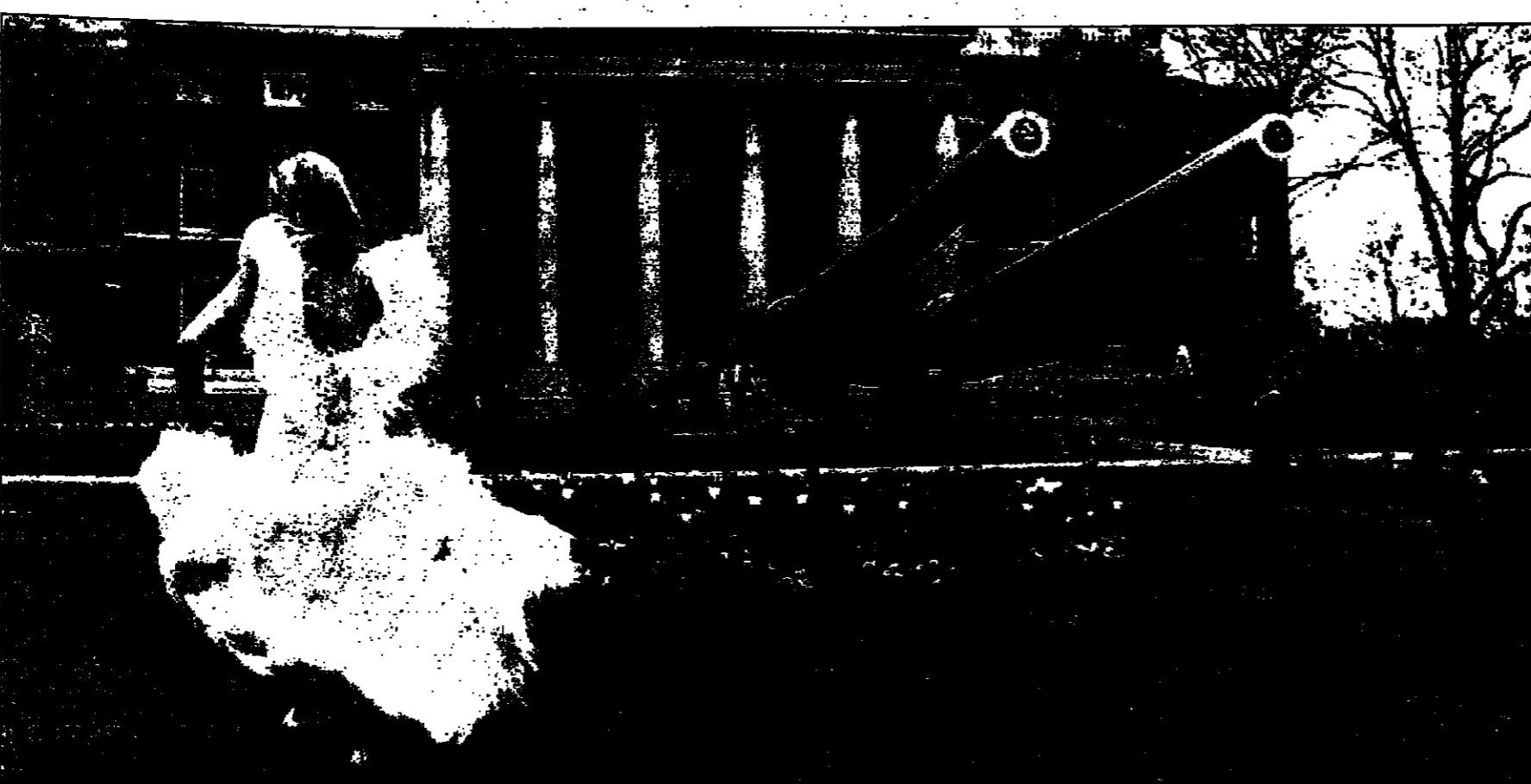
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Back in time: Zoe O'Shaughnessy modelling an exact copy of the white feather dress worn by Ginger Rogers in the 1940s film *Top Hat*

Photograph: Nicola Kurtz

## Ginger classic as Roaring Forties fashion breezes in

Louise Jury

When Ginger Rogers donned her white feather dress in *Top Hat*, one of the 10 films she made with Fred Astaire, the result was a classic of cinema history.

The stunning outfit has been recreated by fashion students at the University of East London for a series of shows at the Imperial War Museum to complement its current Forties Fashion exhibition.

Show organiser Angela Godwin said: "One of the most important influences on fashion in the Thirties and Forties was Hollywood. The original costumes have long since gone so we asked the students to make facsimile costumes. The white dress Ginger Rogers wore in *Top Hat* caused quite a lot of problems because the feathers got up Fred Astaire's nose."

Other dresses which have been copied for the fashion shows — which will take place on 16, 17 and

18 April — include the green velvet curtain dress worn by Vivien Leigh in *Gone With The Wind*, a gold sequin number worn by Joan Crawford in *The Women* and a pale blue crinoline seen on Rita Hayworth in *Cover Girl*. Slightly more risqué is a black satin, bare midriff dress as originally sported by Lauren Bacall in *To Have and Have Not*.

"There was a whole glamour side to fashion at a time when things weren't particularly glamorous," Ms Godwin said. "This is one of the most unusual eras of fashion from the absolutely luxurious to the totally practical."

Some of the more practical clothes are also demonstrated in the catwalk show of 150 costumes which could not be displayed in the main exhibition because of lack of space. They include a cape made from a blanket and men's pyjamas from a parachute.

The shows will be accompanied by the music of the era.

## Ministers in Ireland besieged by pro-life militants

Alan Murdoch  
Dublin

Regular weekend picketing of Irish cabinet ministers' constituency homes by anti-abortion groups has put them and their families under siege in an increasingly confrontational turn in the "pro-life" campaign.

The latest target is the Health Minister, Michael Noonan, whom pro-lifers accuse of being insufficiently anti-abortion. His Limerick home has been picketed for several months, though he has not made it a public issue. An unlikely target to many, the blunt-speaking ex-schoolteacher and former justice minister is hardly the most liberal member of the centre-right Fine Gael party led by Taoiseach John Bruton. Mr Noonan has been singled out in

demands for a new referendum to outlaw all terminations.

Irish politicians face vociferous pressure to state their anti-abortion credentials. In north Dublin, Fine Gael Justice Minister Norma Owen recently received the same treatment. Mr Noonan's predecessor, Brendan Howlin, Labour MP for Wexford, was similarly targeted with demonstrations outside his mother's home.

The law on abortion has been in confusion since the 1992 "X" case, involving a suicidal 14-year-old initially barred by a High Court injunction from going to Britain for an abortion. It was lifted by the Supreme Court after an international furor.

In the aftermath, which saw US funds and personnel arriving to help the pro-life cause, the then Fianna Fail-Labour government of Albert Reynolds held referendums which upheld a woman's right to abortion information and to travel abroad for a termination. Liberals and conservative voters combined to defeat a parallel but unclear proposal that would have allowed abortion when the life of the mother (as opposed to her health) was at risk, a formulation based on the Supreme Court's view in the "X" case.

Anti-abortion campaigners have been pressing ever since for a new vote. This month, amid a dispute over unproven claims that an abortion took place in a Dublin in 1995, they seized on a poll indicating 65 per cent of voters thought the issue should be resolved by another referendum. The survey did not seek to determine the balance for or against liberalising the law, and just 26 per cent in favour of the Dail settling the issue suggested both sides were unhappy with the current legal mess. Family-planning groups maintain Irish women in any case prefer the confidentiality of an abortion in Britain to risk of discovery at home; a choice reinforced by the fixing of the right to travel into the constitution in 1992.

Pro-life campaigners this week held a rally in Dublin, where they were encouraged to increase pressure for the third anti-abortion referendum since 1983. The Pro-Life Campaign chairman, former Senator Des Hamaph, unveiled a position paper "A New Amendment - The People's Right," calling for an additional clause in the constitution reading "No law shall be enacted, and no provision of this Constitution shall be interpreted, to render induced abortion lawful in the State."

A Labour source said the defeat of anti-divorce groups in the 1995 referendum has led right-wing Catholics to return to the battle, with a general election imminent. "During canvassing about one in every 15 or 20 doors will be slammed in your face because you are a member of the Labour Party and we are perceived to be liberal."

### UK party's hard line on abortion

In Britain the ProLife Alliance was set up in November to campaign on a range of moral issues, most notably abolition of abortion. It has found 56 candidates to stand in constituencies where the sitting MP was not a committed anti-abortionist.

The party was founded by Bruno Quintavalle and his mother, Countess Josephine Quintavalle. Despite being known for their anti-abortion stance, except where it would harm



Founder: Bruno Quintavalle

the mother's body, they deny the ProLife Alliance is single-issue. They are committed to repeal of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 1990, which permitted development of test-tube-baby research, and the outlawing of assisted-conception techniques where more embryos were created than were immediately returned to the mother's body.

They say "the pro-life cause is the supreme cause", which is why they do not tackle issues favoured by traditional parties such as transport and the economy. They recently suffered a blow when Mohamed Al Fayed withdrew promised funding.

Sam Coates



## PROTECT CHILDREN: DON'T MAKE THEM BREATHE YOUR SMOKE

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## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

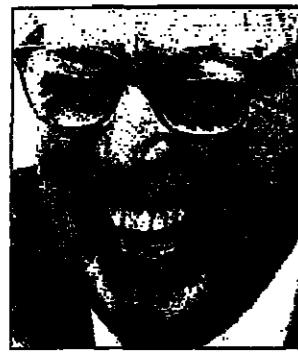
Over-confidence doesn't mean you don't work; it means you don't take risks... As more and more people support you, your success seems inevitable. Your constituents become your guards, and you are left with nothing to say. Plenty of support, plenty of money, but no message. That's how iron-turkey tail. Nobody told the voters this election is over already, so they go to the polls and vote for the candidates who have something to say. From *Behind the Oval Office*, by Dick Morris. Random House



# THE INDEPENDENT

# election '97

## Paisley pact aims to beat off Sinn Fein



**David McKittrick**  
Ireland correspondent

Paisley: 'Putting Ulster first'

Serious betting money on Blair

**Kim Sengupta**

As the election campaign sweeps past the halfway post, the smart money appears to be on Tony Blair cantering past the winning post.

Bookmakers report that betting on Conservatives showed an upsurge after last Thursday's Mori poll showed them gaining six points while Labour fell by the same amount. But "serious money wagers" are still on heavily for Labour.

This view is backed by broadcaster and pundit of the turf, John McCririck, who has abandoned his lifelong Conservative allegiance to become a fervent New Labour backer. Having a punt on the Opposition makes both financial and political sense for Mr McCririck. He said: "You would have to be an absolute mug to bet on John Major winning. He is clapped out, finished, and so is his party. If this was a race Major would get lost on the way to the start. You might as well take a wad of dosh and flush it straight down the toilet."

"I have never voted Labour in my life, but I am going to now. I like Tony Blair, and I believe he will do a good job. I am in fact a right wing Tory, but I have absolutely no time for this particular Government. They have absolutely no ideas apart from a different type of sleaze every day. It would be unhealthy for democracy if they get in."

Mr McCririck is not the only trustworthy backer for Mr Blair. Es-



Shouting the odds: Racing expert John McCririck outside the Houses of Parliament yesterday. "You would be a mug to bet on Major, he is clapped out and so is his party" Photograph: Nicols Kurtz

sex woman is wagering on him going to Downing Street as well.

This is not a psephological abstraction. The woman from Ilford, Essex, has put the biggest single bet of the election so far, £95,000 on Labour winning the election and Glasgow Rangers lifting the Scottish

Premier League.

Other rather unusual bets with William Hill include that of a Sheffield man, a first time bettor who placed exactly £11,467.89 on a Labour win. The middle aged man got odds of 1/6.

Another punter has staked £400

on Referendum Party getting at least one seat, at odds of 12/1, while the party's candidate in Wentworth, South Yorks, has been the subject of a £150 bet.

Overall the bookmakers report a steady growth in the volume of betting. By May 1, the industry total is

expected to stand at around £10m.

David Brown, who heads the political betting department at William Hill, said: "Up until Thursdays Mori poll the betting had been approximately 75 per cent for Labour and 25 for the Tories. At the moment it is running at 50-

50 each. But now that Labour is back

in the lead again in the subsequent polls we expect the situation to change again."

"Sleaze" on the agenda, and

that wonderful confrontation be-

tween Martin Bell and Christina

Hamilton has added to the soap

opera element, and this has brought in the punters."

Yesterday William Hill were offering 1/6 Labour, 7/2 Conservatives, and 250/1 Liberal Democrats.

Ladbrokes had cut their odds on a

Tory victory to 7/2 from 4/1, after an

increase in betting for Tories.

## A factory of the future shows the way with pay

**Steve Boggan**

Tony Blair paid a visit yesterday to what he believes is the business of the future – a factory where workers are paid less than the Low Pay Unit recommended minimum and where unions are almost non-existent.

The visit, to Landis & Gyr Communications in Croydon, south London, came in recognition of the fact that the company had voluntarily laid down its own minimum wage – £4 an hour – without union involvement.

But that is 42p an hour less than the Low Pay Unit recommends. 26p less than the favoured Union rate and lower – by an unspecified amount – than what the Transport & General Workers Union and the

GMB general union would like to see. For the past two years, the GMB has been running a campaign entitled: "More Than £4".

Asked by *The Independent* whether he could live on such a wage – £1.52 a week before tax – Martin Brennan, managing director of the company which made £4m last year, replied: "I would find that difficult. I am concerned for my workforce but if I pay too much, I am out of business, so which do you want?"

Mr Blair toured the factory where smart cards and payphones are manufactured for BT, and he posed for photographs with Selvamani Selvakumari, 48, who tests the phones.

Asked whether this was a business of the future, Mr Blair said: "Sure. It is investing in its

employees and treats them fairly.

It is successful and is exporting to world markets in a way that is applying new technology with an educated workforce." Asked whether he thought £4 was fair, he said it was a matter for management and the workforce to negotiate.

Mr Brennan said he would accept union collective bargaining if more than half of 200-strong workforce wanted it – only six are in unions – but Mrs Selvakumari said staff were so happy they did not need it.

Shanti Patel of the Low Pay Unit felt £4 an hour was too low, but added: "We see a lot worse – in some cases £1.79 an hour". She said only 8.2 per cent of Croydon workers earned less than £4.42 an hour.

Asked whether this was a business of the future, Mr Blair said: "Sure. It is investing in its

## significant shorts

### Labour's white suits turn off black voters

The missing black voter was highlighted by a leading black commentator who said many blacks were turned off the main parties through a lack of vision. Darcus Howe, a *New Statesman* columnist, said his vision of New Labour was men in "white suits" and accused it of failing to appeal to the aspirations of black voters in areas such as Brixton, where he lives.

Colin Brown

**Ahead of the Prime Minister**  
Paul Collins, 19, the first time-voter who clashed with the Prime Minister after John Major referred to his Mohican hairstyle and called him a cockerel, lost all his hair a couple of years ago following chemotherapy treatment. The student now sports a brilliant red coiffure. He successfully beat bone cancer and now affirms: "If I wanted to I could grow a full head of hair. I don't want to talk about my illness except to say that it is in the past. How anyone wears their hair is a personal matter."

Tony Heath

Only jockeys, fools and horses would normally have been at the Newmarket stables in a sharp east wind on a Friday afternoon.

But this was day 25 of the general election campaign and John Major went on a walkabout among the racehorses accompanied by two coach-loads of reporters and film crews.

The aim was to draw attention to Labour's wobbles over the threat to privatise the Tote, chaired by Lord Wyatt – whose

daughter, Petronella, a *Daily Telegraph* journalist was on hand to decry the star horse as a less

seasoned runner than Mr Major.

The Prime Minister, no great

judge of horse flesh, and more

at home at cricket grounds,

## Major on course among real runners and riders

**Colin Brown**

Only jockeys, fools and horses would normally have been at the Newmarket stables in a sharp east wind on a Friday afternoon. But this was day 25 of the general election campaign and John Major went on a walkabout among the racehorses accompanied by two coach-loads of reporters and film crews.

The aim was to draw attention to

Labour's wobbles over the

threat to privatise the Tote,

chaired by Lord Wyatt – whose

daughter, Petronella, a *Daily*

*Telegraph* journalist was on hand

to decry the star horse as a less

seasoned runner than Mr Major.

The Prime Minister, no great

judge of horse flesh, and more

at home at cricket grounds,

met one of the Aga Khan's horses, trained by Luca Cumani at the Bedford stables, and said:

"It's not bad life is it?" Perhaps he had noted they are allowed to sleep on shreds of manure liberally sprinkled with manure.

The surreal life of a prime

minister chasing the favourite

in the race for 1 May began with

a rowdy public meeting at Nor-

wich where Neil Kinnock's for-

mer adviser, Charles Clarke, is

defending an inherited Labour

majority of 4,350.

Facing a hostile crowd,

the Prime Minister said: "This elec-

tion is starting to come alive.

The more it becomes alive, the

less the Labour Party people will

be able to hide their leader."

A young seller of the *Big Is-*

sue

heckled Mr Major about the homeless and was told that the Tories would tell Labour local councils to hand over their empty homes after a year to agencies who would fill them. "Put that in your Big Issue," he said.

One man shouted obscenities

and was told by a police constable

"You can speak to him, but

but don't swear. Now that's

fair, isn't it?" Zero tolerance for bad language had its immediate calming effect. The crowd

changed its chant: "Get your

soup and slippers, Major.

You're boring."

Mr Major got back into the

battal bus telling aides: "That

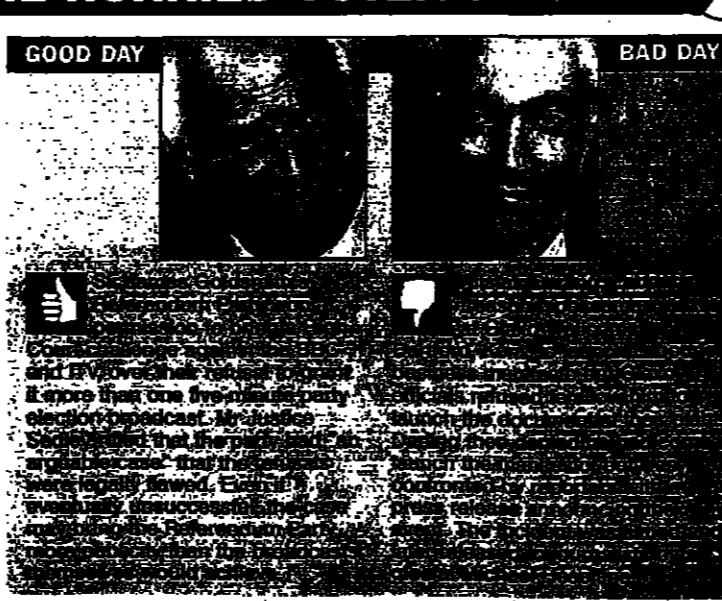
was great." His aide said: "He

feels this kind of campaigning

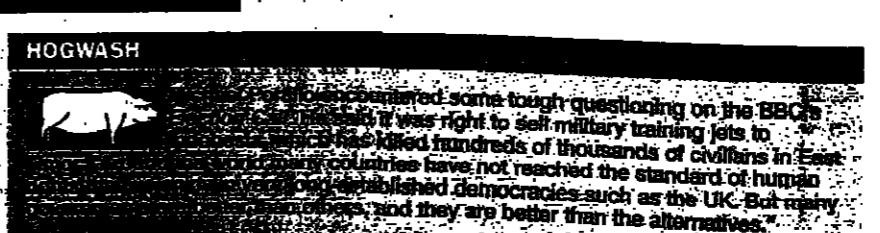
– with the leader on the hustings

– has not been seen for years."

## THE HURRIED VOTER'S GUIDE



Another candidate has announced her intention to stand in the Tatton constituency. The Transformer, a seven-foot-tall transvestite, stands for "the major themes of modern society - music, fashion, glamour, sex, equality, hope, escapism and, of course, sleaze". She has vowed to confront Hamilton on the campaign trail, wearing a dress consisting of sewn-together brown envelopes and £50 notes. Has Christine Hamilton finally met her match?



The Green Party launched its manifesto for the second time yesterday, claiming the media had ignored the first launch last month. David Taylor, a party spokesman, said they would continue launching the manifesto to ensure fair coverage. The Greens will fight 90 seats compared with 225 in 1992.

The Natural Law Party promised to create "heaven on Earth" at its manifesto launch in London yesterday. Geoffrey Clements, the party's leader said: "When we look around at the galaxies and the Earth they are governed by natural law. But what is absent in this country is that same natural law." The party is contesting 300 seats.

## MEDIA STAR

Another candidate has caught up with Agriculture Minister Angela Eagle. The former MP had they spotted her election mini-bikini and speed off. The reporter gave chase, and eventually collared with a press conference outside her constituency headquarters in Epsom. She tried to reinforce her comments on the single currency, and rejected calls for her resignation, saying: "I think the media have probably got it wrong. I think it is important that you will see it is in line with-party policy."

ries, talks with John Paddy

# Pastries, punks and pep talks ... on the road with Tony, John and Paddy



Once, when caught misbehaving at school, I was given the choice of serving one-hour's detention or writing an essay about the inside of a ping-pong ball. It wasn't obvious then, but writing about the inside of the ball was good practice for covering Tony Blair's election campaign from the rarefied confines of one of his battle buses.

After two weeks, and thousands of miles, on the road, up the tracks and in the air, the 50 or so press corps - whose employers have each paid £7,500 for a ticket - know more about the Labour leader than did at the start. Except, perhaps, that his university reputation for acting and learning his lines is well deserved.

There are three buses bearing the legends "Leading Britain", "Into the future" and "With Tony Blair". They are interchangeable, although, as the Labour leader pointed out (borrowing from a columnist), the drivers of "Into the future" and "With Tony Blair" are under orders not to allow "Walls Sausages" vans to come between them.

Nerves are fraying, not least because of the mostly vacuous nature of the visits being undertaken by Mr Blair. Since he began his campaign, there have been largely stage-managed question-and-answer sessions in Derby, Kidsgrove and Basildon. There have been school visits in Redditch, walkabouts in Exeter, Northampton and Stirling and university and factory visits in Warwick and Croydon.

Most of these are put on for the benefit of the local media, local government

granted interviews with Mr Blair, while the national press are kept well back. Questions shouted desperately at him by national hacks are greeted with a blank smile.

Again and again, Labour's Big Ideas about reduced class sizes for five-, six- and seven-year-olds, windfall taxes and shorter NHS waiting lists are trotted out - for soundbite consumption only.

During Q&As, Mr Blair often takes in his breath, stands back, utters the words "You know..." and launches into what looks like an impromptu diversion. In fact, these moments of improvisation are often seen more than once. Nevertheless, members of the audience, seeing them for the first time, say they are impressed by his off-the-cuff messages and the sincerity they convey.

Journalists stand in fenced pens during walkabouts, are often excluded from parts of visits and are kept well away from the Labour leader. So tight is the rein on which reporters are kept that on Wednesday the Press Association correspondent was asked to take off her brown coat during a photo opportunity because it was deemed to be a depressing colour on a sunny day.

There is an upside, but even that benefits Mr Blair. Since he began his campaign, there have been largely stage-managed question-and-answer sessions in Derby, Kidsgrove and Basildon. There have been school visits in Redditch, walkabouts in Exeter, Northampton and Stirling and university and factory visits in Warwick and Croydon.

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The most striking image to date of John Major's tour has been the Prime Minister being heckled in the market square at Brecon by a student with a bright red mohican haircut. And that is the way the Tory campaign strategists like it. Mr Major is fulfilling his commitment to the party conference last year to be out on the street fighting to win against all the odds.

He is approaching his campaign like the leader of the opposition and is attempting to unsettle Labour which means making himself available to challenge Tony Blair at every opportunity, from the soapbox, the street and the new platform attached to his battle bus.

His rallying speech to party supporters at the JCB plant on Thursday was almost exclusively devoted to challenges to Mr Blair.

It is Mr Major's stock in trade on the street; he gets the biggest cheers for accusing Mr Blair of hypocrisy on education for his son. He frequently jokes about Mr Blair being chicken for not facing him in a television debate.

The soapbox is also Mr Major's natural battleground, the Brixton boy trying to convince the unconvinced on the streets.

It is a style of campaigning foreign to many modern politicians briefed on television technique. But Mr Major is also acutely aware of the cameras. Never prepare to kick a ball, kiss a child or pull a pint for the cameras in case the image backs

tography, he refused to hold a camera, leaving it to his wife, Norma, to steal the show.

There have been times when he tactfully refused to answer questions. On the racecourse at Aintree on Monday, after the Grand National, Mr Major was prepared to do a "doorstop" with reporters on the IRA's failure to stop the race, but reporters were warned off mentioning Neil Hamilton and Martin Bell. Jon Sopel of the BBC was ordered by an aide "not to spoil it" by asking questions that had been put to Mr Major in the morning.

The adoption of Mr Hamilton and the disarray in the Labour ranks on privatisation, the unions and Scotland have produced a transformation in his mood.

From Mr Snappy on Tuesday, Mr Major had become Mr Accessible on Wednesday,

even chatting happily to the press on board his loaned British Midland 737 as it flew back from Brecon. He appeared genuinely relaxed and enjoying taking the fight to Labour at last. At yesterday's press conference he turned his fire on Labour spin doctors - accusing them of treating their leader as if he had "the Plague".

Addressing the assembled throng of reporters, he told Labour was intent on keeping Mr Blair "away from our questioning, [and] away from you rough lot whenever they possibly can".

He went on: "They are keeping Mr Blair out of the way as if he was the Plague or New Black Death as no doubt they would call it. It reminds me of the old cry - bring out your dead."

The Paddywagon began to roll last Monday - several days after the larger caravans of the main protagonists had already moved off. In the last five days we have covered around 3,000 miles by coach and by air, eaten several kilos of sandwiches together with a daily dose of Danish pastry courtesy of Titan Airlines.

The media posse on the "Battle Bus" is not as large as it was. The *Financial Times* has bailed out and the *Guardian* makes only cameo appearances. Yesterday there were just 12 reporters, whereas 40 are accredited.

Unlike his cardboard cut-out rivals, Mr Ashdown is accessible and approachable. Presumably that is because he hasn't got a cat in hell's chance of becoming Prime Minister and can say what he likes without forensic examination by political journalists searching for inconsistencies.

Not that you would know that from listening to him. When he speaks, he will routinely use the phrases "we will" and "what we will do" in reference to the political decisions a Liberal Democrat government would take. This is fantasy politics, but it is fun.

It can also be hectic. On Thursday the usual 8am press conference was followed by a trip through east London to the City airport in Docklands. From there we flew in our smallish ATR42 turbo-prop aircraft to Edinburgh for an 11.30 press conference where Mr. Ashdown "put a kill" on his policies. Then a sports college at noon where students were seen punting themselves

on treadmills and a group of pensioners frolicked in the swimming-pool.

Thence to the Scottish borders for a pastoral interlude at a farm near Galashiels.

Back to Edinburgh, from where we flew to an out-of-season Southport, "a poor man's Blackpool", by some accounts.

There, Mr. Ashdown preached animation to the converted. Not so much "go out there and prepare for government", as "don't listen to the polls, go out and grab a few votes".

Back on the coach at 8.15pm for a 9.30pm flight from Manchester to Stansted and a coach back to central London where we arrived at 11.30. Mr. Ashdown had already been whisked in a helicopter back from Southport to London for a television appearance. And yesterday, a press conference at 8am ... and so on. Even the super-fit Lib-Dem leader admitted on the coach out to Northolt airfield that he was "knackered".

By all accounts the Paddywagon has a far more agreeable atmosphere than the battle buses of the Lib Dems' rivals. Mr. Ashdown regularly briefs journalists, although he spends most of his time in a small compartment at the back of the coach.

There is a sweet little armchair for him to sit in and a television. Journalists are welcomed to the inner sanctum for one-to-one interviews, where Mr. Ashdown is "mind-ed" by Ian Wright, an amiable "travelling press officer".

It is the life of a political gypsy. Only 20 days to go.

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# There's a shock in store for the canvassers



**Supermarkets prove an unlikely haven from election. Glenda Cooper reports**

If you feel that it is impossible to get away from political hectoring, there is at least one area that promises to be an election-free zone. All but one of the major supermarket chains are barring politicians from handing out stickers, leafleting customers or kissing babies in their stores.

Already the Foreign Secretary, Malcolm Rifkind, has twice been turned away from a Safeway shop in his Pentlands constituency in Edinburgh because he had not informed them he was coming. And the Asda store in Govan, Glasgow, told Alex Salmond, the leader of the Scottish National Party, not to campaign inside the shop or on the car park. Mr Salmond claimed he had only gone there for lunch.

But while many might see election-free zones as a relief, Dr Richard North, the Referendum Party candidate for South Derbyshire, is accusing supermarkets of "direct interference in the democratic process" after he was refused permission to hand out leaflets in his local Sainsbury's car park.

In past days when most people shopped in high-street centres, there was free access to voters. Now with giant megastores like Sainsbury and Asda creaming off the trade from the high

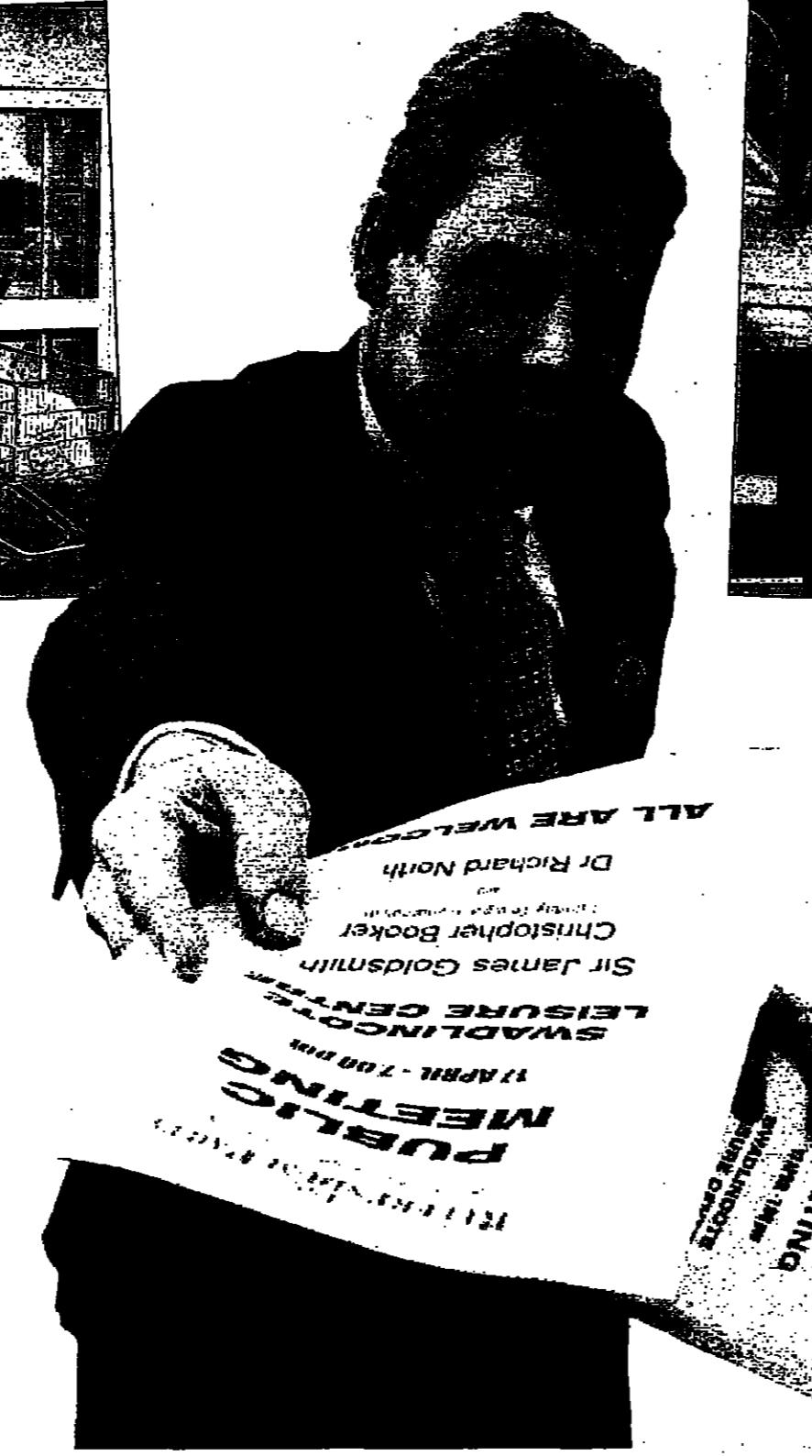
streets they are also closing down access to people by blocking off their premises to election workers. This is a disgrace," he said yesterday.

But Asda, Sainsbury and Safeway, who have all forbidden canvassing, say that rather than conflicting with the democratic process they are non-political organisations who do not want to subject their customers to canvassers. Only Tesco

has taken the opposing view, saying that their mixed base of customers is an ideal place for politicians to find out what real people are thinking.

Bernard Hughes, the company's government affairs manager, said that they had made amendments to their usual policy in the light of the election. "On Friday night and Saturday people are in supermarkets. That's where the constituents are ... and this is where the local politicians can deal with them."

## The megastores are closing down access to people



**Fast work: Referendum Party candidate Dr Richard North (centre) has five minutes to canvass shoppers (top left) at Sainsbury's in Swadlincote, Derbyshire, before store manager Keith Hodley (top right) tells him he must stop, or leave**

Photographs: Rui Vieira

it did not object to candidates kissing babies. "We didn't want to say they couldn't do anything. What we did was inform the main parties that they could have visitors by candidates and bring national figures if they wanted a photo opportunity but no formal canvassing such as giving out stickers."

He reckoned that around 200 candidates would have made visits to the stores by the time the election took place.

And he said Malcolm Rifkind had not been allowed in because he had not made prior arrangements: "We have to be equal to all parties. We can't allow political activists just to turn up."

"There would be so much confusion it would be impossible. If Labour and the Tories and the Liberals turned up at the same time there could be a lot of aggravation."

So far Safeway's in Reigate, Surrey, is the only shop due to see all three main candidates but Mr Hamilton said that people should not be put off going there as a result: "Say a visit lasts half an hour, one and a half hours over six weeks is not too much."

Diane Lamb at Sainsbury said that they had also issued guidelines to the store allowing visits but banning campaigning and canvassing.

## Candidates are free to walk round, not to kiss babies

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He said that the policy was being applied across all stores and it was not an infringement of democracy: "In our view it's the last thing customers want."

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# God's Banker: 'He was given Mafia money and he made poor use of it'

Andrew Gammel

For 15 years the mystery of Roberto Calvi's death has been left spectacularly hanging, in much the same way that the body of the Italian banker was found dangling from a piece of scaffolding beneath Blackfriars Bridge in London on June 18, 1982.

Was it suicide or murder? Was it really credible that an elegantly dressed businessman would stuff his pockets with banknotes and 11 1/2 pounds of bricks, and then string himself up from a precarious platform just above the Thames? On the other hand, was it really conceivable that professional killers would have gone to the trouble to do this to him?

At last, it seems something approaching an answer is at hand. This week Italian prosecutors issued arrest warrants for two key figures in the Calvi saga: his friend and confidant, theardinian businessman Flavio Carboni, and the notorious ruseur of Cosa Nostra, Pippo Calo.

The hypothesis, backed by 90 pages of closely argued deposition papers, is that Calvi was killed by the Mafia because he had either misused or embezzled millions of dollars of their assets. Since his fraudulent financial empire was on the brink of collapse, the prosecutors claim, he risked revealing the details of his Mafia links to the state authorities.

The indictments of Carboni and Calo are the result of five years of investigation based on the testimony of several senior members of the Mafia who

have decided to collaborate. The new evidence confirms many earlier suspicions about Calvi's murky links with the criminal underworld and the notorious P2 Masonic lodge, and casts new light on his extraordinary dealings with the cream of Italy's financial establishment, including the Vatican bank.

Calvi's descent into the shadows originated from his association with Michele Sindona, a Sicilian financier who enjoyed similar access to the Italian business and political elite and the Vatican, but in reality was a fraudster in cahoots with the Mafia. Sindona too died mysteriously, poisoned inside the maximum security prison where he was serving a life sentence for the murder of the magistrate who exposed his financial dealings.

Through the networks established by Sindona, Calvi began using his Banco Ambrosiano to circumvent Italy's strict laws on the export of foreign currency. Then, in the late 1970s, he acted as Cosa Nostra's chief money-launderer, siphoning off billions of dollars from the heroin trade into a network of front companies stretching from Europe to the Bahamas. His financial trickery included illegal transactions with the Institute for Religious Works, also known as the Vatican bank, as well as alleged dealings with Licio Gelli, the grandmaster of the P2 lodge, the secret network that penetrated deep into the Italian state and is suspected of attempting to subvert it.

Carboni was, according to the prosecutors, the main link between the two men and submitted incriminating evidence at a hearing before a magistrate's court. It took a detective agency hired by the Calvi family to enter unmoved.

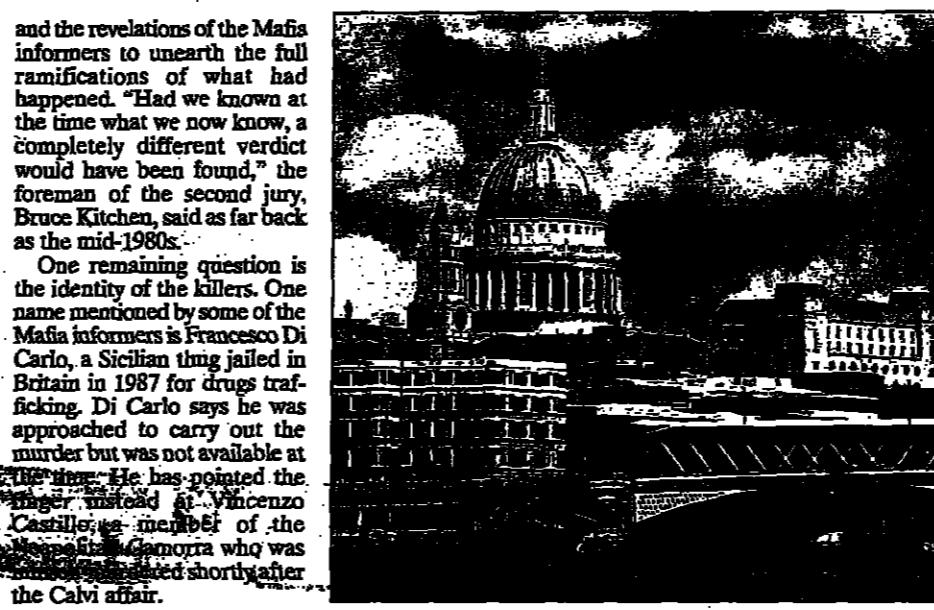
Calvi was thus abducted and strangled somewhere between the hotel and Blackfriars Bridge with the same orange cord that was later found tied around his neck.

Calvi was killed out of revenge, the Mafia super-informer Tommaso Buscetta has testified. "He was given Mafia money to recycle and he made poor use of it."

Why has it taken so long to reach this conclusion? Part of the reason is the British judicial system which, perhaps because of a lack of familiarity with the extraordinary workings of the Italian banking system, has been unable to understand that Calvi was a victim of his own greed and ambition. In a recent hearing, the magistrate's court returned a verdict that took a detective agency hired by the Calvi family



Murdered?: Italian banker Roberto Calvi (above) whose body was found dangling on an orange rope beneath Blackfriars Bridge in London (below) on a June morning in 1982.



## The final, frightened days of Calvi

The approach came almost exactly 15 years ago in classic Calvi fashion: oblique, elliptic and through an intermediary. In April 1982 I was Rome correspondent of the Financial Times. A lawyer acquaintance called, inviting me to lunch. I arrived to find a third man at the table, who first merely identified himself as "a representative".

Only well into the meal did it emerge precisely whom he represented in Rome: Roberto Calvi, the mysterious and secretive chairman of Banco Ambrosiano, implicated in scandal after scandal, yet still head of what our paper at least was the largest private banking group in Italy. Gradually I realised I was being inspected and weighed up. How interesting it might be, the third man mused just before we parted, if I could meet "Il Presidente" in person.

A couple of days later, the phone rang. An interview had been arranged for later that week in Milan, days before what would prove to be Ambrosiano's last annual general meeting of shareholders. I was taken into the Ambrosiano building, through a maze of security checks.

Always and obsessively private, Calvi would not be seeing me in his own office, where I might divine some clue to his personality. Instead, we met in what seemed a small anteroom, drab and featureless, just off a grey marble corridor. The image, months before he would be found hanged, lingers to this day. He was a bulky, ungainly man, of utterly unimpressive looks. He sat half slumped behind a desk, his suit dishevelled as if he had slept in it.

Sometimes he would drum the edge of his desk with his fingers. A nervous tic on the left side of his mouth, beneath the thin moustache, periodically made him grimace as he spoke. For a man of his status and apparent power, his language was ill-educated, coarse and almost peasant-like.

He imparted no new information, insisting he was victim of a conspiracy, hunted and persecuted by police, magistrates and politicians and other



Rupert Cornwell

Author, 'God's Banker'

ers whose names he would not speak. He deflected questions about recent reports of a \$600 million "hole" at its shadowy subsidiary in Lima, Peru. Ambrosiano, he insisted, was sound. But two things Calvi could not conceal. One was exhaustion. The other was fear. To a grotesque degree he possessed the common Italian belief that life is controlled by dark and secret forces. Once he commanded these forces, but by early 1982 the protector himself desperately needed protection. The previous year Calvi had been briefly jailed on charges of stock manipulation. He had been exposed as a member of the P2 freemasons' lodge. Worst of all, the gigantic fraud on which Ambrosiano was built could no longer be concealed.

Whether or not the Mafia killed him, Calvi and Ambrosiano beyond doubt were part of the murky underside of Italian life at that time, where perverted free masonry, the secret services, organised crime and right-wing terrorism blurred into one. As his problems mounted, he felt in increasing physical danger.

The elaborate protection within the bank was one sign. Outside, a platoon of bodyguards and the armour plated Alfa Romeo in which he travelled were costing £4 million (£22,000) a day. He took to carrying a pistol in his briefcase to the office. At the end he insisted his daughter Anna leave Italy for her own safety, telling her of his fears for his life. If Italian investigators this time are right, those fears were amply justified.

## Between Beethoven and the minarets

Christopher de Bellisqve

"This is a picture of modern Turkey," proclaimed President Suleyman Demirel in Ankara at the end of last month. However, this landscape of 8000 minaret-lovers, assembled to hear a stirring performance of Beethoven's ninth symphony, may not have been to the liking of Ismail Kahraman. When Turkey's Islamic-minded minister of culture entered the concert hall he was greeted by a chorus of his own - boos and whistles.

Mr Kahraman has upset Western-oriented compatriots by publicly preferring the construction of mosques over concert-hall culture. What concert critics indicate is that Turks are dividing on simple lines: Europe versus the Middle East, English versus Arabic. As culture in Turkey becomes more elastic, the exchange between secularists and Islamists get shriller and Turkey's coalition government, which contains both, looks more fragile.

Nowhere are divisions clearer than in the field of education. Secularists say the European model promoted by Ataturk, the founder of modern Turkey, is under threat. They united last month to support a teacher-trainer who refused to instruct trainees wearing Islamic-style headscarves. Now they applaud the efforts of Turkey's interventionist military to reverse a dilution of the system which Ataturk established.

When the generals loudly demanded a return to secular values in February, their most contentious requirement was a crackdown on religious schools, called Imam Hatips.

The secular line is that the Imam Hatips, which are vocational schools set up to supply clergy, have exceeded their brief. Not only do Imam Hatips produce more than 10 times the graduates required for mosque duty, but the young Turks they produce seem increasingly devout. The recent survey found 80 per cent of Turks schooled in Imam Hatips favour the Islamisation of Turkey's secular legal system, while only 10 per cent consider Turkey a European country.



Istanbul's minarets: Secular values are declining in Turkey

A recent survey found 80 per cent of Turks schooled in Imam Hatips favour the Islamisation of Turkey's secular legal system, while only 10 per cent consider Turkey a European country. Imam Hatip representation was thin at the Beethoven concert, less than 2 per cent of graduates confess a weakness for

also want Imam Hatips only to accept Turks aged 14 and above. This does not suit the religious schools, which prefer their recruits to be young and impressionable. Neither does it please the pro-Islamist Welfare Party, the senior partner in Turkey's ruling coalition.

Welfare looks on religious education with a benevolent eye. They want Imam Hatips to be accepted as an integral part of the education system.

The military has other plans. In show-downs with Necmettin Erbakan, the Welfare party Prime Minister, smart money tends to go on the generals, who often benefit from the support of the Islamists' coalition partner, the centre-right True Path Party.

The problem on this occasion is that True Path is not being cooperative. Although Tansu Ciller, the True Path leader, has said the military's demands will be implemented in full, she seems reluctant to let Welfare emerge as the champion of Imam Hatips, where almost half a million young Turks - all voters of tomorrow - are being schooled.

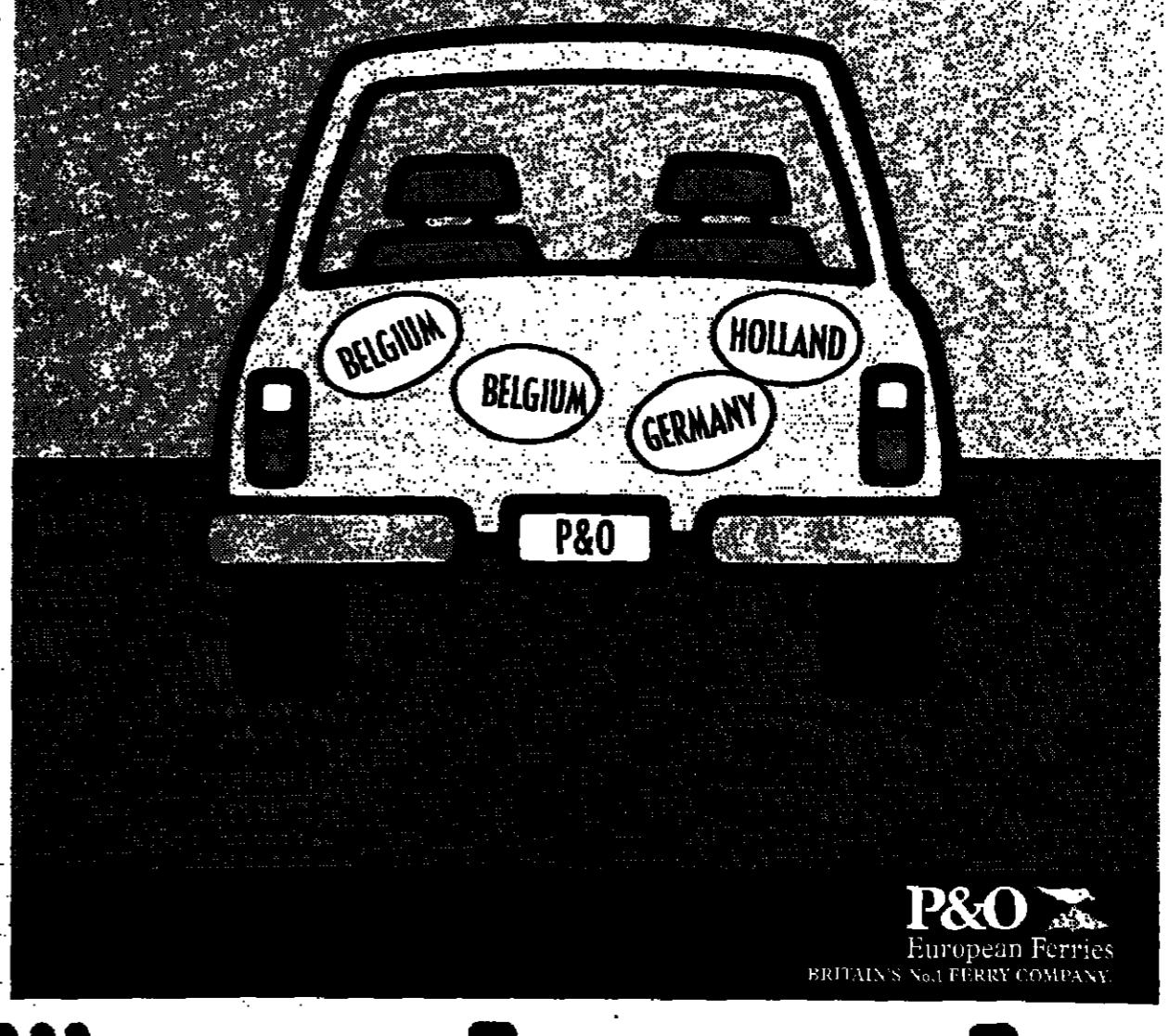
More than 150 Imam Hatips were opened while Mrs Ciller was herself prime minister.

Military tempers are said to have been frayed by tense relations with Mrs Ciller and by the government's conspicuous failure to implement other secular measures, which the generals demanded more than a month ago. The generals are unmoved by arguments that it was they themselves, in their promotion of Islam as an antidote to Communism, who made religious instruction compulsory in high schools. They claim the support of secularist groups, which have been lobbying hard across the country.

Mr Erbakan and Mrs Ciller are trying to find a formula acceptable to all sides. But most observers suspect that the generals will only be satisfied when all their demands have been implemented. The last time a government ignored the military's advice, in 1979, the generals took over.

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## international

# India prepares for its sixth PM in six years

Jan McGirk  
New Delhi

Political manoeuvres in India, the world's largest democracy, are starting to rival Italy for surprise tactics as New Delhi prepares for its sixth prime minister in just over six years following yesterday's vote of confidence.

The BJP holds 162 seats, the largest single majority in Parliament, far more than the Congress party's 140. (The United Front's 178 seats are patched together from over a dozen regional parties.) But BJP leader Atal Behari Vajpeyi, 70, failed last spring to come up with sufficient allies to form a government.

The Congress party, as the traditional advocate of secularism, supported Mr Gowda's motley 13-party alliance, primarily to block the BJP. When Sitaram Kesri, the Congress president, announced on 31 March that he would no longer prop up Mr Gowda's United Front, he blamed the Prime Minister for betraying their mutual stance against communalism by meeting the notorious fundamentalist Bal Thackeray. The fiery leader of Shiv Sena (Shiva's Army), Thackeray is the bogeyman who helped mutate

cosmopolitan Bombay into conservative Mumbai, now controlled by the BJP.

Anger against the Congress president for sending the government into free fall without bothering to consult his colleagues was evident in some of the fist-shaking speeches which resounded in the Lok Sabha during ten hours of long-winded debate yesterday. But most of the ire came from Mr Kesri's own party members.

A Congress stalwart, Mr Kesri used to crouch and touch the feet of Indira Gandhi and her sons whenever he met them. Some dismissed him as a toady. But, as charges of corruption mounted against former leaders of his party, Mr Kesri was outraged and became fearful for his own reputation. His sudden wrath against Mr Gowda, 63, took even insiders by surprise.

President Shankar Dayal Sharma holds the trump card: he can ask the BJP to again try to assemble a government, or turn to the Congress Party, or allow the old United Front coalition to continue with a new leader. He may also dissolve parliament and call for snap elections.



A Congress Party supporter waits outside its headquarters in New Delhi ahead of yesterday's vote

Photograph: AP

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## Big Brother keeps an eye on the media underlings

Stephen Vines  
Hong Kong

The *South China Morning Post*, which has been a loyal supporter of the Hong Kong government for most of its history, is to have the founding editor of the Chinese government's mouthpiece, *China Daily*, installed in an office next door to the editor's. Officially, Feng Xi Liang, 75, will act as a consultant.

The appointment of Mr Feng, which has yet to be announced, has caused considerable disquiet among the newspaper's staff, who fear that it heralds greater Chinese political influence over the paper.

A staff member said: "No one's happy about this. We're waiting to see what happens, but we fear the worst."

Asked what influence Mr Feng would have over the content of the paper, Jonathan Fenby, the *Post*'s editor and a former *Observer* editor, would only say: "I am the editor of the paper". He added: "We'll go on as we have been going and you can judge that from what's in the paper."

It is understood Mr Fenby was not consulted about Mr Feng's appointment, but he refused to comment on this issue. The *Post* is owned by the tycoon Robert Kuok, who bought control from Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation. Mr Kuok is

an adviser to the Chinese government and regarded as well connected to China's leaders.

Mr Feng is well known in Chinese journalistic circles. He has lived in Hong Kong for some years, where he served as an editorial adviser to the defunct English-language *Window* magazine, which was known for its avid support of the Chinese government.

All editions of China's major state-run publications are Communist Party members and report to the party's propaganda department. It is unlikely Mr Feng is an exception, particularly as the *China Daily* was created to be the government's chosen means of communication with the outside world.

The *South China Morning Post* maintains that it is pursuing an independent line in covering Hong Kong and China news but this view is not shared by many observers. The *Post*'s pro-British stance has been long abandoned and the paper shows marked caution in reporting and commenting on events likely to anger the Chinese government. A manage-

Hong Kong handover

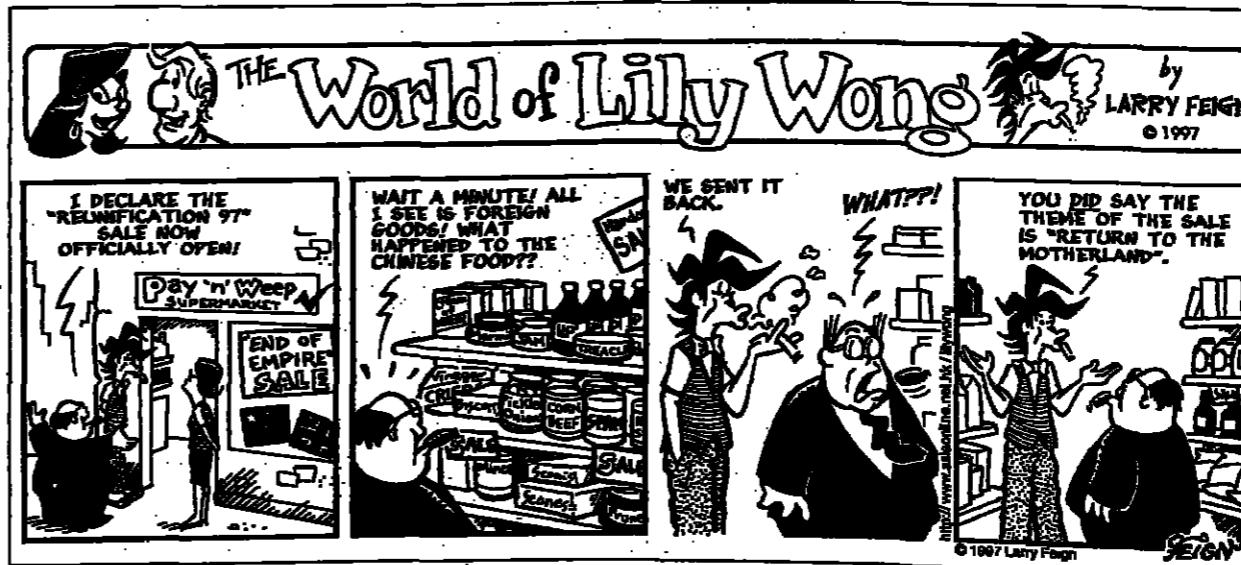
most Hong Kong newspapers is not alone in having political appointees join its staff. The Sing Tao group, which publishes the rival English-language *Hongkong Standard*, has the former press secretary to Lee Kuan Yew, Singapore's authoritarian Senior Minister, as a special adviser to its owner.

The influential *Ming Pao* paper has an increasing number of mainland Chinese journalists writing in editorials. They have joined a mini-influx of formerly China-based journalists who are employed by practically all local newspapers.

Most of the Hong Kong media, particularly the electronic media, have become keen supporters of the new order. The local television news increasingly resembles the output of China's Central Television station. Sensitive subjects are avoided and prominent critics of the Chinese government appear far less often than they used to. Pressure on the media from China is mainly exerted through proprietors.

Tung Chee-hwa, who will head the first post-colonial government, also appears to like to work through proprietors.

This week he convened a meeting of the heads of Chinese-language newspaper companies. He reportedly told them he intended to keep in touch on a regular basis.



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# Mobutu defies rebel threat to take capital

Zaire's beleaguered president will not bow to ultimatum, writes Ed O'Loughlin in Kinshasa

With a deadline for his effective surrender about to expire, Zaire's beleaguered President, Mobutu Sese Seko, seems determined to ignore the threats and warnings from rebel leader Laurent Kabila.

The streets of Kinshasa were calm yesterday, despite a three-day ultimatum issued on Wednesday by Mr Kabila to stand down, or face further military action. And while rebel radio broadcasts have warned foreign residents to leave Kinshasa, there was no sign of a mass exodus of Westerners.

The rebels, who took the key southern mining centre of Lubumbashi in midweek, claim to have military units within 200km of Kinshasa, and to have infiltrated fifth-columnists into the capital itself. Western diplomats are sceptical of this claim and believe the nearest rebel forces are still several hundred kilometres away, across the

rainforests and broken roads of central Zaire.

A Pentagon spokesman said in Washington on Thursday that 1,200 US Marines and 400 other military personnel are in a state of high alert in the region, ready to go into Kinshasa to rescue the 430 US citizens living there. France, Belgium and Britain also have contingents on standby in the Congolese capital of Brazzaville, just across the Congo River from Kinshasa.

Western diplomats in Zaire appear to have embarked on a delicate mission to persuade Mr Mobutu to stand aside, but without provoking a panicked reaction from the regime. This week Belgium and the US, both former allies of Mr Mobutu, called on him to give up power. On Thursday the US State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said any strategic reason for backing Mr Mobutu had ended with the

"Considering his state of health, the fact that all the institutions he created are derelict, bankrupt, not credible and that the rebels have taken over at least half of the country, it was necessary to call again publicly for this kind of transition," Mr Burns said.

That same day, however, the American ambassador to Zaire, Daniel Simpson, was among several Western diplomats who paid courtesy calls on General Lobulu Bolongo, the military Prime Minister appointed by Mr Mobutu when he introduced a state of emergency. Afterwards Mr Simpson said he still believed Mr Mobutu had a role to play in ensuring peaceful change in Zaire.

"I don't think that Mobutu or any other one person is responsible for all the problems of this country," he said.

Yesterday General Bolongo announced a 28-member national salvation government,



Heading home: A refugee carrying her possessions back to the eastern city of Goma, which she fled to avoid the fighting

with top army generals in charge of the defence and interior ministries.

Speculation in Kinshasa centres not so much on whether Mr

Mobutu's rule will end, as when and how. If Mr Mobutu flees, he has recently undergone treatment for cancer.

President Mobutu has shown himself to be a great survivor in his 32 years of rule, and few

observers are yet prepared to write him off. Diplomats believe that some members of Mr Mobutu's entourage are still urging him to play his hand out

to the end, as the President's abdication would rob them of any lingering chance they have to hold on to Zaire's vast mineral wealth.

## significant shorts

### EC strikes deal with US over anti-Cuba laws

The European Commission said yesterday it had struck a deal with the United States settling its trade dispute over the US Helms-Burton anti-Cuba legislation.

European Union Trade Commissioner, Sir Leon Brittan, said in a statement that the deal should allow the EU to suspend a panel that has been set up within the Geneva-based World Trade Organisation.

Sir Leon said the deal would also "chart a path towards a longer-term solution through amendment of the Helms Burton Act", which seeks to isolate the government of Fidel Castro by stopping investment. Reuters - Brussels

### Angola swears in government

Angola yesterday swore in a government of national unity intended to cement peace between rivals who brought the country to its knees during nearly two decades of civil war. President José Eduardo dos Santos said in a speech at a ceremony attended by 13 foreign heads of state that the new government would be no miracle cure for the country's many ills.

Reuters - Angola

### UN soldiers in torture charges

The Belgian military court said yesterday that it had arrested one soldier and was investigating others over allegations that they tortured children while serving with United Nations forces in Somalia in 1993.

The investigations were prompted by pictures and stories printed earlier this month in Belgium's *Het Laatste Nieuws* newspaper. The pictures showed soldiers, their faces obscured, holding a Somali youth over a fire and forcing others to eat worms.

Reuters - Brussels

### Gunman kills Serbian minister

A gunman killed the feared commander of Serbian President Slobodan Milošević's security apparatus as he dined with his son in a Belgrade restaurant yesterday. Media reports said Deputy Interior Minister Radovan Stojčić died instantly at his table.

Reuters - Belgrade

### Albanian papers go to press

Several Albanian newspapers resumed publication yesterday after a month-long interruption, in a further sign the country was returning to normal. Two independent titles in Tirana put out their first editions in a month yesterday, raising to four the number of dailies that have returned this week after parliament relaxed restrictions on local media.

Reuters - Tirana

### Telephones reach Tokelau

The president of the last country in the world to get telephone service became its first citizen to make an international call Friday. Aliki Faipule Faima Teao, head of Tokelau's government, called the New Zealand Prime Minister, Jim Bolger, to thank him for contributing \$1m to the \$2.76m project.

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## international

**Trial backlash:** Killers 'not acting on specific orders but as part of long conflict against Kurds'

# Fall-out from a secret war

Robert Fisk  
Beirut

The hit-team whose Berlin murder trial has caused a diplomatic rupture between Europe and Iran were acting under a "green light" from an Iranian Revolutionary Guard intelligence committee which decided more than 10 years ago that all members of armed groups opposed to the Iranian regime must be "neutralised". There was, according to a man closely associated with the thinking of the Iranian state on such matters, no personal decision taken by individual members of the Iranian leadership, as the judges in the Berlin trial suggested.

European ambassadors are being withdrawn from Tehran - and Bonn and Tehran have each expelled four diplomats - after judges at the trial of an Iranian and three Lebanese found guilty of murdering four Kurdish opposition figures in 1992 blamed Iran's leadership for ordering the deaths. "It's a misunderstanding of how these things happen," the very well-con-

nected source told the *Independent* in Beirut yesterday. "These liquidations are not carried out on the specific orders of President Rafsanjani or the spiritual guide Ali Khamenei - there are long-standing orders to neutralise all armed opposition wherever it is, even in Europe. They come from the Pasdar (Revolutionary Guard) committee and they are not going to change, whatever Europe does."

The Iranians regard their war with the Kurds as an undercover campaign in which dozens of deaths go unrecorded by both sides. "I was in Oroumieh (in Iranian Kurdistan) and my Iranian guide told me we could go no further because six Pasdars had been murdered by armed Kurds the previous week," the man told me. "I said I hadn't heard this news. He said that five or six Iranian Pasdars were killed every week or so, maybe a hundred in a year - the Kurds come across from Iraq. It's a secret war, you see - the Iranians don't give their own casualty figures for security reasons."

As for the Iranian leadership, the

source said, they would hear news of assassinations and "make inquiries as to what had been happening and they would be told why such-and-such an event took place. These liquidations will carry on - they don't care. Their most important aim is the security of the regime. Maybe methods will change but the regime's security will always come first and that means killing opponents who use violence."

In the early days of the Islamic Republic, the regime's enemies might be targeted by individuals who sought the leadership's support for their actions. This was the case in the first assassination attempt against the Shah's last prime minister, Shapour Bakhtiar. The idea to kill him in Paris was first suggested by a pro-Iranian Lebanese and it now transpires that Ayatollah Khomeini himself expressed scepticism as to whether the assassins could be successful. Assured that they could - although they subsequently failed in their attempt - Khomeini did personally agree to let the hit-team try to kill Bakhtiar. No such decisions were

any longer taken by the leadership. The man closely associated with Iran in these matters was deeply cynical about Europe's reaction to the Berlin murders. "What about Greenpeace when the French sank the ship in New Zealand and killed a man?" he asked. "Was that a 'green light' from the French defence ministry or the Elysée? What about the Israeli assassination of Ali Ayash, the Hamas activist (and bomber) by the Israeli intelligence last year? Did the green light to murder him come from Israeli intelligence or from (then prime minister) Shimon Peres? It must have come from Peres - but you didn't debate that. What we do is to neutralise our armed enemies. The Israelis were neutralising their armed enemies."

In northern Lebanon, a mysterious murder in Tripoli has still not been forgotten by those involved in the ruthless intelligence war. Auxious to kill a Lebanese close to the pro-Iranian Hezbollah called Hassan Moussawi, the source claims that a French DGSE (intelligence) team - auxious to eliminate

those who were killing French troops of the multinational force in Beirut in the early 1980s - was sent to kill Moussawi as he lay in a hospital bed in Tripoli. Hassan Moussawi was indeed assassinated - but he was a peasant who happened to have the same name as the Hezbollah associate, who is still alive today. Those close to Iran believe that Moussawi's murder was sanctioned by the Elysée Palace.

"This diplomatic crisis will last three or four months," the source said, reflecting an Iranian view of the affair which will change if Europe decides to isolate Iran to the degree President Bill Clinton has been demanding. "Maybe the Iranians will think about the fact that Europe is showing that it stands together. But I don't think it means anything in the long term. It will blow over. In the end, the regime's security remains first and foremost. The CIA openly states that it has \$20m to destabilise Iran and Iraq - and it supports the armed Kurds who want to destroy the Tehran regime. So why shouldn't Iran fight back?"



Bolts from the blue: Israeli soldiers scanning the rooftops for Palestinian stone-throwers in Hebron, where there have been daily clashes

Photograph: AP

## Arafat tip leads Israelis to killers

Patrick Cockburn  
Jerusalem

Israel says the bomber who killed three people in Tel Aviv last month was not trying to commit suicide but died because explosives in a bag he was holding blew up prematurely.

The revelation comes after Israel arrested a six-member cell of Islamic militants in the village of Surif, north of Hebron, who allegedly killed 11 Israelis and wounded 49 over the last 18 months.

Ahmed Rahman Ismail

Rahman Ramim, 25, the leader of the cell, led Israeli troops to the grave of Sgt

Sharon Edri, an Israeli soldier, shot dead last year when he got into a car driven by members of his group. The discovery of his body is causing embarrassment to the Israeli police who at one stage said they believed that Sgt Edri had disappeared for personal reasons.

The arrest of alleged members of the cell, which formed part of the military wing of Hamas, is also causing some embarrassment to the Israeli security forces.

They had believed the rash of attacks in the area was being carried out by the so-called "Halhoul Cell" of the Popular Front for the Liberation of

Palestinian, a militant but secular organisation in a neighbouring town.

The break-up of the cell appears to have come partly as the result of co-operation with the Palestinian Preventive Security after pressure from the United States on Yasser Arafat, the Palestinian leader, to resume security co-operation with Israel.

Yitzhak Mordechai, the Israeli Defence Minister, said: "We are talking about a murderous cell, which killed five Israelis in the region of Geffen Tirosh, three Israelis in the Tel Aviv coffee house, two soldiers along the Hebron-Jerusalem road and also kidnapped and

murdered Sharon Edri in cold blood."

The discovery of the cell somewhat deflates the theory of Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli Prime Minister, that Mr Arafat gave "a green light" for the Tel Aviv attack, since the Surf group appears to have attacked whenever an opportunity offered.

Mousa Ramim, one of the Ramim clan, which is powerful in Surif, accidentally blew himself up in the Anropo coffee house in Tel Aviv three weeks ago.

The cell, which started to operate at the end of 1995, did not find it difficult to kill Israelis. Their method of operation

shows the impossibility of full protection against such attacks.

All of the cell members looked like Israelis, spoke Hebrew because they had worked in Israel and, for the same reason, knew their way around.

They had a car with yellow Israeli licence plates, so they could operate easily within Israel. All were in their twenties and most had been arrested for Hamas activities.

Two of the six cell members were arrested within areas controlled by the Palestinian Authority, after the CIA put pressure on Mr Arafat. Despite the obsessive focus on security in Israel, actual security mea-

sures are frequently slack. Israeli soldiers often hitchhike to or from their bases. All the Hamas group had to do to get Sgt Sharon Edri, who was buried yesterday, into their car, was to offer him a lift. When he became suspicious they shot him.

Mr Arafat will want Israel to pay a price for the resumption of limited security co-operation.

Zeev Schiff, a security specialist on the daily *Ha'aretz*, says the Palestinian leader is saying to the US that he is willing to act against Hamas but that "now Israel has to do its part by halting the construction of Har Homa and the expansion of the settlements."

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# Today's forecast: unsettled, with scattered reforms

**H**ow do we decide what is important? No, this is not a question about the meaning of life, but about the way a modern democratic society orders its priorities. Because it is obvious that this kind of election campaign is not the best way to do it.

The language of priorities is not just the religion of socialism, it is the belief-system of politics generally. It is the language of political speeches, of manifestos and opinion polls (and often of newspaper leader-writers). But there is a disjunction between what are often described as the "most important" issues and what really concerns people in the day-to-day.

Perhaps this gap explains the dreamlike unreality of the election campaign, which has bounced about between central and side-issues in an alarmingly casual way. Mostly, it has not even been about the issues that the politicians profess to think are "important".

Tony Blair has, with an American trick of rhetoric, described his top three priorities as education, education and education. And yet his policies for our schools and colleges have hardly featured in the campaign. In the opinion polls, unemployment is usually at the top of the list of "most important" issues, yet Labour's plans to get a quarter of a million people off welfare and into work are only just beginning to come under scrutiny. Like our

professed willingness to vote for higher taxes to pay for increased spending, this seems a classic area for voter hypocrisy, because there is no evidence that plans to tackle unemployment actually change the way anyone votes.

A good case has often been made out that the advent of a single European currency presents our democracy with the biggest decision it has had to take since the war. Yet it only began to feature in the campaign yesterday, and then (inevitably?) only as a "Tory split" story.

Meanwhile, in the real world this past week, the subject on most people's lips (and on their cancer-endangered skins) has been the weather. This is not merely the English living up to their national stereotype, but an undeniably "important" issue. Why has summer arrived two or three months already? It is well established that population growth and economic activity has changed the climates, and will go on doing so for decades. But apart from some jarringly apocalyptic words from John Gummer, the Environment Secretary, the growing understanding of cause and effect has yet to make the connection to policy, political argument and action. Nor will it by 1 May. There are some things our political process simply can't cope with.

This is not to say that the election is point-



less, or somehow anti-democratic. It is simply that in the absence of big policy questions between the parties, the purpose of the campaign is primarily as a character test. It is about choosing which team can best be trusted (or distrusted least) to make the best (or least bad) decisions about the "important" issues as they come up, and whatever they are. In the analogies of political science, the voters in this election are not going shopping, having to choose between baskets of policies, but are choosing an investment trust, in which the policies of the management team are less important than their record, and their record in turn less important than their general dependability.

On this model, the weakening of party loyalties is not simply a product of the convergence of the main parties on the centre ground of politics, but a response to the disarray of voters' interests and causes.

The environment is typical of the categories of problems that cannot easily be organised into two rival world-views, between which the voters can choose using the first-past-the-post system. The green debate takes place largely outside the party-political process; yet issues such as climate change are utterly political. They can only be tackled by collective action, at national and international level, and the priority accorded to them can only be decided

by some form of democratic decision-making. Other excluded issues are beginning to burst the seams of our restrictive, antiquated system. The Referendum Party, the People's Trust, the Pro-Life Alliance and tactical voting campaigns are evidence that some people's passionate concerns are not being accommodated.

The trouble with all these is that they tend to be top-down rather than bottom-up initiatives. But we should not be depressed about this, because it implies that a new politics is waiting to be born. It might need top-down change to stimulate it, but it would arise naturally from a concerned and active citizenry if it were not stifled by the present set-up.

That is why reform of the House of Lords, self-rule for Scotland, Wales and London, and a referendum on the voting system, would be liberating and transforming. Lords reform alone would upgrade the forum in which important issues can be debated. Above all, however, a reformed voting system would give expression to dispersed competing interests and allow the people to make more meaningful decisions about what matters – as well as simply about which team gets to walk into Whitehall. So you could say constitutional reform – reform of the way Britain is governed – is actually the "most important" issue of this election. It affects everything else.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Stag-hunting ban: National Trust bullied by the animal rights puritans

Sir: I am a member of the National Trust and I choose not to hunt, but I am appalled at the decision of the Trust's council to ban stag-hunting (report, 11 April). The Trust cannot now logically deny any activist who presents a scientific report which demonstrates that animal cruelty occurs.

In the light of this precedent how can the Trust do anything other than ban fox-hunting? How can it do anything other than ban fishing,

which can hardly be said to be stress-free for the fish?

Wider issues than animal welfare should have been taken into account. Habitats suitable for hunting are bi-diverse and support many other species. They are now at risk to commercial forestry and the desolate monoculture of intensive farming. Hunting is part of a cultural heritage which stretches back into pre-history. It remains one of our last links with

our natural "hunter-gatherer" past. Who is to say which is the most cruel: that an animal lives in a natural environment in a natural way for all of its life and suffers some stress and cruelty in its last few hours; that an animal is shot, if lucky cleanly, and if unlucky left to die a lingering death; that an animal lives the whole of its life in an unnatural environment such as a cage, stall, enclosure or field, is often fed an unnatural diet and is selectively

bred to exaggerate characteristics such as milk production?

The Trust should be ashamed of itself. It has let itself be bullied by the New Puritans of the animal rights movement.

LESLEY ELLIS  
Alton, Hampshire

Sir: Chasing red deer with hounds has been found to be probably cruel. Who'd have thought it? The next

subject for these intrepid scientists to research should be the effect on small mammals and birds of the ghoulish and protracted process of being caught, teased, tortured, and terminated by domestic cats. My own beloved moggy performs such atrocities daily.

There is an inconsistency when a nation of cat-lovers criticises a handful of humans.

MELVIN GOLDSMITH  
Parleigh, Essex

### Too coy on constitutional reform

Sir: Andrew Marr is right ("Voters try to smoke out New Labour", 10 April). Labour's lack of excitement about its own radical proposals for political reform is extraordinary. Yet Labour and the Liberal Democrats have reached agreement on how reform will be implemented (should Labour form the next government).

This agreement, together with a mandate for change from the voters, could enable a reform-minded government to put constitutional Bills through the House of Commons in the same way as other Bills – in committee, avoiding any danger of a legislative log-jam. But if the parties don't campaign for democratic reform during the election period, can they legitimately argue that they have such a mandate and break this parliamentary tradition?

Charter 88 wants to open up the election agenda and give voters an opportunity to question their would-be MPs about our system of government. On 22 April we will hold Democracy Day meetings in around 200 constituencies.

ANDREW PUDDLEPHATT  
Charter 88  
London EC1

Sir: It is a pity to see Dr David Cromwell (letter, 9 April) attacking the Liberal Democrats for failing over the environment.

The Liberal Democrat manifesto names as a priority the setting of tough targets to cut energy waste, reduce traffic congestion and control pollution. It guarantees to cut VAT and taxes on jobs and make up the difference by taxing pollution, and to encourage people to drive more fuel-efficient cars by cutting car tax for cars up to 1600cc.

Dr Cromwell is right to point out the Green Party's role in the Road Traffic Reduction Bill (and the Home Energy Conservation Bill) but the

Liberal Democrat commitment on these issues has been demonstrated by the fact that both of them were adopted and pushed through by Liberal Democrats. As campaign organiser for both bills I am well aware of their efforts.

All Green Party members should hope for a larger Liberal Democrat presence in the next parliament and therefore should continue themselves to exposing the piffling records of the Labour and Tory parties.

RON BAILEY  
(Green Party member)  
London SE6

Sir: Will Toni Carver ("Stormy waters in Cornish marginal seat", 7 April) confirm the reason for David Harris standing down as MP for St Ives? His wife was ill; unfortunately she has since died. Mr Harris may well wish to be back in Parliament, but he has never tried to get back the St Ives nomination. Like many others who have known him, I sincerely hope David Harris may return to Parliament; we need men and women who maintain his standards of decency and integrity.

GODFREY B SIMMONS  
Bromsgrove, Hereford and Worcester

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GODFREY B SIMMONS  
Bromsgrove, Hereford and Worcester

Sir: Your theory that Murdoch will soon be taken over Channel 5 (Rob Brown, 7 April) faces some credibility hurdles. Certainly, the prospect of co-operation between Sky and Channel 5, particularly over sport and movies, was noted at the time Sky participated in a bid for Channel 5. However, Sky's valuation of such a prospect was presumably reflected in the level of that bid: well below that of every other applicant.

As for the listed sports events, your theory misses the fact that Channel 5 is as forbidden as Sky from showing these treasures exclusively.

The *Sun* and *The Sunday Times* participated in joint marketing ventures with Channel 5; but so did many other national newspapers. Editorial, they have been no more supportive of Channel 5 than any other papers.

The joint bid by Sky and Channel 5 for our channel's test service has no external significance. If I ignored this point when I wrote to you, it was because my colleague Ian Ritchie had already decimated the fantasy published in your Sunday edition, which mistakenly headlined this modest joint venture as Murdoch taking a stake in Channel 5 itself. Unfortunately, his letter was not published.



Tableau of death: A detail from Gericault's 'Raft of the Medusa'

Louvre, Paris/AKG

### Acclaimed body of work behind Kelly's cadaverous casts

Sir: It is an interesting adjunct to the art/science divergence debate that the artist Antony Noel Kelly has been arrested for an activity that was considered entirely acceptable within the genre of Romanticism ("Police ball sculptor who crafts bodies", 10 April). Indeed, the anatomical realism displayed in Géricault's *Raft of the Medusa* is directly attributable to his studies from corpses and body parts "borrowed" from a local morgue.

It intrigues me that, in an era when trains are allowed to run over a woman's body for hours on end and it is considered amusing for medical students to take cadavers to parties, a serious artist is castigated for traditional methods.

TOM HARDY  
London SW12

Sir: David Cohen ("The Bodies in Question", 11 April) is right to be sceptical about the use of human body parts by the sculptor Anthony Noel Kelly, but I think his blanket

dismissal of the use of casts of "found objects" is unjustified.

He notes that the old masters "who risked the law to work from cadavers did so from a humanist impulse to understand life and the body". But the use of casts was also crucial to the development of a humanist artist. Artists' studios contained plaster casts of limbs, heads and faces as well as of antique sculpture.

What marked these casts out as specifically "humanist" was that they were casts taken from life. Medieval artists frequently used death masks, particularly for sepulchral monuments. Casts from death masks were sometimes even superimposed on terracotta busts.

This is the tradition to which Kelly belongs. Not surprisingly, these artefacts look grimly inert.

In mid-15th century Florence, however, a revolution occurred when life masks started to be used. The art historian John Pope-Hennessy has written that "with the

introduction of the life mask there intrudes into the portrait bust for the first time an interpretative element".

The key example is Antonio Rossellino's bust of the doctor Giovanni Chellini in the Victoria & Albert Museum. Pope-Hennessy concluded that with this bust "Renaissance portraiture acquires a third dimension, a new weight and thoughtfulness". The use of life masks licensed liveliness and vitality in art: it forced the artist to give the depicted body a soul.

This is as true today as it was then. For artists such as Antony Gormley, Marc Quinn and Kiki Smith, the cast from life is not, as David Cohen would have it, "a way to evoke the real without the effort or skill involved in drawing". It is a springboard for the imagination. This is why their best work seems so charged, focused and thoughtfully alive.

JAMES HALL  
London SW11

### Healing experiment hasn't a prayer

Sir: Three groups of patients are to be prayed for, or not, to "test" the healing power of prayer (report, 11 April).

A positive result will be hailed by theists as evidence that God exists, whilst a negative result will merely indicate to them that God did not wish to co-operate. The initial hypothesis is thus not susceptible to refutation. This farce is not an experiment worthy of the name, and Professor Russell Stannard's standing as a scientist is seriously compromised. Have faith, by all means, but do not confuse it with science.

T.P. O'CONNOR  
Department of Archaeological Sciences  
University of Bradford  
London WC2

### Popular dads

Sir: So 80 per cent of children want more time with their fathers (report, 10 April). Why has this been interpreted as a sign that the "new father" is a myth? Perhaps we should be congratulating "new men" if their children want more time with them – if children had wanted more ice-cream we would not assume ice-cream sales had fallen.

APRIL BECKERLEG  
Grendon Underwood, Buckinghamshire

### Tory bandwagon

Sir: A picture really is worth a thousand words. I have just received a Conservative Party election leaflet containing a paragraph on transport policy and car use. It is illustrated with a picture of their idea of a typical car – Range Rover.

STEVE MARRIOTT  
Longworth, Oxfordshire

## LETTER from THE EDITOR

I haven't been offered a bribe, yet. There have been heavy and indignant phone calls from most of the political parties – we monitor them, trying to ensure that we are getting parity of abuse – and at least one (journalistically) improper suggestion. "We won't forget this," has been snarled at me more than once.

This is roughly what I

expected editing a newspaper during an election campaign to be like. But, so far, there have been no satisfactorily concrete offers of cash, preferment, material goods or government contracts in return for pulling David Aaronovitch off this, setting Poly Tynbee on to that, or altering the drift of the front page. No extortion, no payola, nothing sleazy at all. Maybe the campaign isn't quite at fever pitch just yet.

On the other hand ... the

money demanded by the political parties from newspapers to get our correspondents on to the leaders' buses may not be extortion, but if it is beginning to feel extortive. As Steve Bognan, travelling on the Tony Blair bus convoy, says in today's paper, they are seeing very little of the leaders and are able to do too little in the way of proper, informative reporting. For the main parties, there are around 50 journalists each, paying £75,000 or so for the privilege: the £375,000 bus pay for a lot more than the hired buses and the coffees.

I can justify this to our shareholders if we are getting hot, fresh stories. But it's a little steep for giving reporters the privilege of hearing soundbites and seeing the back of the Blair coach speeding along the motorway

country, too: "This fact was reflected in the children's names – such as Energy, Tractor and the Second Five-Year Plan."

And not only there. Despite this week's Labour wobble, and John Major's genuine self-confidence, I remain sure that Tony Blair is heading for Downing Street. This belief is reflected in the names being given to new-borns in north London at the moment. In the homely terraced streets of Kentish Town, New Labour parents have taken to giving their daughters names such as Faith, Ciabatta, Roquette and Tottie – which is short for Tough-on-the-Causes – while in the estates and flats that hug the slopes of Highgate Hill, there are whispers of baby boys being named Millbank, Mandel and Grant, which is an abbreviation of Grant-Maintained. Any readers who have given their children similarly inspiring names are asked to write in and share their happy news.

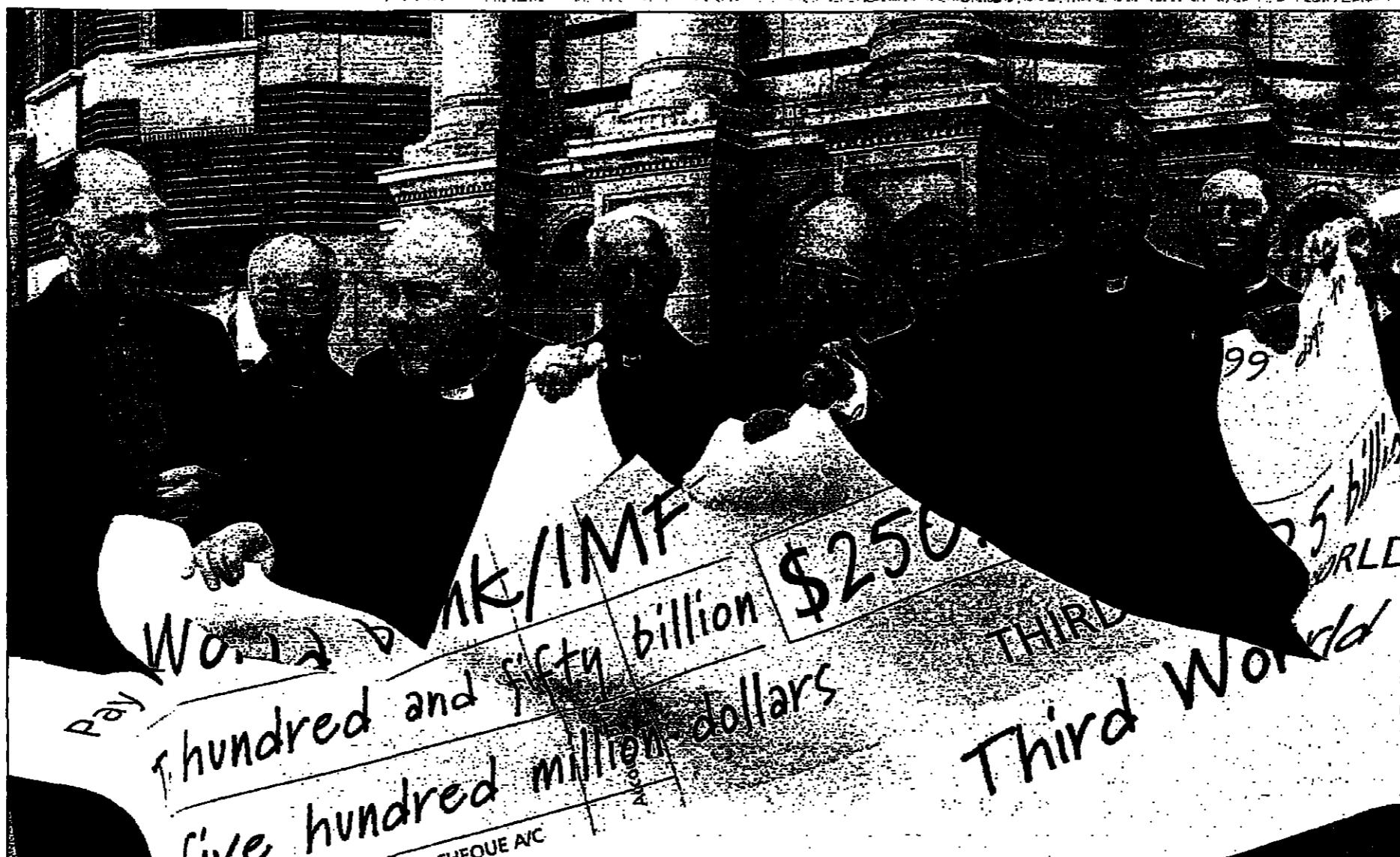
Andrew Marr

### QUOTE UNQUOTE

I am not on an ego-trip. I am here to help people – Martin Bell, independent 'anti-slavery' candidate in Tatton

If Martin Bell thinks being hit by shrapnel is bad, just wait until he's dealt with me over the next three weeks – Christine Hamilton, wife of Neil, the Conservative candidate for Tatton

## the saturday story



From the church pulpit to the political arena: Catholic bishops put their hands to the task of tearing up Third World debt to the West

This week the bishops spoke out on Third World debt and the jobless. But do their words carry any weight when they cross the line between Christian principles and practical economics, asks Paul Vallely

It was once a joke about sex. How far can you go? In the early Sixties that was the question which pre-occupied young Roman Catholics anxious to discern the fine line between the venial sin of heavy petting and the mortal one of sexual intercourse. At my school there were common-room rumours about casuistical rulings under canon law which specified that sexual congress had taken place only once the penis was inserted more than one third of its length. But I digress into the traditional province of the church and that is not where we find ourselves these days.

Today religious folk seem more concerned with social and economic policy. This week we have had the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Rev George Carey, telling us that the nation has become morally inarticulate and demanding a rejuvenated ethical agenda in our schools. The day before we had the Bishop of Liverpool, the Right Rev David Sheppard, presenting a scathing report from the nation's 11 main denominations on unemployment which put the main political parties on the defensive with its precise demands for job creation, higher taxes and a minimum wage. And the day before that we had the Roman Catholic bishops of England and Wales issuing a statement on Third World debt which cast doubt on the effectiveness of the policies of the World Bank and the IMF.

How far can you go? Dr

# The gospel on social justice – but who's listening?

Carey's address at the Institute of Education in London, cogent though it was, fell pretty much into the traditional pattern of abstract clerical extortions to moral improvement of a kind which even Margaret Thatcher would not have objected to in the old days. But Dr Sheppard's report and the Catholic bishops' demand stray into more detailed territory. How far can you go when it comes to the line between broad moral principles and detailed economic policies? Further now, perhaps, than ever before.

There will always be the stick-to-your-pulpit brigade. But while in the Thatcher years such a reaction dominated the political scene, today it finds a home only in the more bilious of our right-wing tabloids. Even *The Daily Telegraph*, which bizarrely condemned the Sheppard report as Communist, proceeded to it more outlandish conclusions after conceding

that the churches could properly concern themselves in political matters. The right, indeed the duty, of religious leaders to speak out on politics has become part of modern political currency.

But can they offer a distinctive "Christian view" or are they simply Christians giving views which have no more value than anyone else's? "The temptation facing each one of us is to interpret Jesus's teaching to fit our preconceived ideas," says Lord Griffiths, the evangelical Christian who was for five years head of Mrs Thatcher's Downing Street policy unit.

True, there are certain abstract principles which can be distilled from reading the Bible – that men and women are made in the image of God and thus possess divine dignity; that the right to food and clothing is God-given; that humans have their relationship to God as social creatures and not individuals; that God has a prefer-

ence for the poor and that poverty is not defined simply by a lack of food and clothing but by social exclusion and psychological dispossess. It is clear, too, that the Bible contains systematic measures for righting social injustice; that the blindness of affluence can be as great a sin as malice; that the rich must not merely give to the poor out of their surplus; that it is not enough to aid the victims of injustice without challenging unjust structures; that the cost of fulfilling all this will be heavy, or even sacrificial.

But how do you move from there to a call to cut the employers' national insurance contributions or a judgement on the adequacy of the performance of the World Bank?

"An attempt to legislate the ideals of the Kingdom of God into practice immediately comes up against the fact that the real world is made up of fallen human beings and is not a community of saints," says Lord Griffiths. "You need evidence – and you won't find it in the Bible," says the Rev Ronald Preston, Emeritus Professor of

Social and Pastoral Theology at Manchester University, the doyen of Christian economists. "You have to have tools to analyse the situation and then be able to identify the presuppositions with which you interpret the evidence. The church has no moral purchase unless it has done its homework."

"Once you have decided that full employment is desirable," says Andrew Britton, one of the Chancellor's original "wise men" economists and author of this week's church's report on unemployment, "you have to discover whether in a modern economy it is feasible."

Britton's working party was much bolder in the journey from moral precept to political policy than was the pre-election document issued by the Catholic bishops, entitled *The Common Good*. "We divided it into two sections – on principles and on application," says Nicholas Coote, secretary to the Catholic bishops, "and we said that on the latter we knew we might be wrong."

There were internal tussles in the Catholic group over whether the principles of

Catholic social teaching – as set out in 100 years of social philosophy developed in papal encyclicals – could be extended with integrity to certain policies. In the end support for the UN target of giving 0.7 per cent of GNP in foreign aid was ruled outside its parameters. So was a recommendation that all Catholics should join their appropriate trade union. So support for the proposal to devolve more authority from central government that local authorities must retain their statutory duty to house the homeless was dropped. "We had to decide what was the doctrine of good men," said one insider.

But this week's statement on international debt was more forthright. Generalisations in *The Common Good* about the need for debt relief have become a direct critique of the IMF and World Bank and of Western governments' tardiness in pursuing them. "The moral principle of solidarity extends worldwide," says Nicholas Coote. If IMF structural adjustment programmes are not in accordance with that, "if they throw too much burden on the poor and do not ask the rich to share it, then that collides with our moral precepts."

But the church's thinkers accept that such collisions can be complex. "In a just modern economy three things are desirable – stable prices, full employment and free collective bargaining," says Professor Preston, "but no amount of pious talk can make you have all three at once. You have to have a trade-off."

The detailed work will always be ambiguous. Take the issue of unemployment. The logic of Bishop Sheppard's report runs thus: unemployment is a moral evil; full employment is desirable; therefore a minimum wage is needed. The response of Tory ministers has been to say that the minimum wage is counter-productive because it will destroy jobs. Professor Preston is unimpressed by such an ideological response: "If you work on the pure theory of the free market in some ideal Weberian model that might be true. But there's never been one. So the argument turns on empirical investigation and the results it has to be said, are rather ambiguous." In France and Germany it seems to cause problems, in the United States it does not.

But for the church this is where another factor comes into play. "The minimum wage is a matter of humanity. It is a moral issue," according to Andrew Britton.

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Gradually, various celebs are popping up to offer their support for one party or other in the run-up to the election. I'll give you three guesses who Barbara Nor-A-Gusset-In-Sight-In-My-Books Cartland has plumped for. Yep, it's the jolly old true blues, of course. In Barbara's world, Europe is a threat, John Major is a gent and stease doesn't exist. Gentlemen have "affair", but that, of course, is their business. In Barbara's world, wives and mistresses keep it shut and grin and bear it. Thank Gawd most of us don't have to live there any more.

I am constantly on the lookout for examples of how bad people are, and was given some good examples this week when a bloke in a big lorry came to take my car to the garage after it had seriously misbehaved. We were chatting away about some of the sillier call-outs he'd had. These included a man calling him at three in the morning because he thought his indicators were clicking backwards and forwards too slowly, and a call-out just before Christmas dinner to a woman who had reported a "wheel

problem", which turned out to be a problem in fitting the new wheel-trims she had got for Christmas. No wonder GPs so frantically tried to prevent people calling them out over Easter for spurious reasons. We're a nation of complete wallies.

Anyone pottering about serenely in their garden in this better-than-you'd-expect-for-the-time-of-year weather, or tending their window boxes, should perhaps bear in mind that many accidents occur in such idyllic settings. Figures released recently by the Association of British Insurers show that not only do lawn-mowers and hedge trimmers leave us with a number of injuries; flower pots also seem to injure us with some frequency. The deputy director of the ABI points out that gardens are dangerous places, but we can avoid accidents by taking simple precautions. Staying in watching telly sounds like a simple precaution to me.

I suppose, over the years, I have accepted that advertising exists and that there is little that can be done about it, although I don't like it. However, I do resent it

when advertising starts moralising about the way we live our lives. Those of us who do proper jobs will never have experienced the joys of Richard and Judy, who are sponsored by BT. This unfortunately has resulted in a series of little scenarios which BT has come up with in an attempt to educate us as to how we should talk to each other. Mothers are pictured shouting at wayward daughters, and husbands snapping at housebound wives. We are then treated to the BT version, in which problems are sorted out with a well-placed, caring comment or an empathetic smile, while we are bombarded with sociological facts about families. I find this offensive, given that it is conducted under the auspices

of trying to get us all to put more money into the wallets of BT bosses. Anyway, judging by some of the abrupt treatment I've had from directory enquiries, the privilege which, after all, we are now paying for, maybe they should be concentrating on their staff for a kick-off.

The Dutch army is the total antithesis of the image most of us have of your average close-cropped, pin-smart automaton, who obeys orders to the letter and never questions a decision. Some time ago the soldiers' union won Dutch soldiers the right to long hair, and my brother, who lives in Germany, tells me that they often sit and have a meeting about important decisions with the odd joint being passed round.

It seems now that female Dutch soldiers are looking for parity in terms of bodily adornment. A female private is currently disputing an order to remove a stud from her tongue, because the military bans only jewellery worn visibly on the head. So as long as she doesn't stick her tongue out at senior officers, one would imagine her to be OK. Still, knowing the Dutch army, they're probably allowed to do that.

Ooh, I do love a party political broadcast. The other night I watched the Tory broadcast that has a bit of an attempt at an Orwellian 1984 style, in which talking heads are seen, depressed, face to camera, bemoaning the fact that Labour has ruined everything one, two and three years hence. One character has lost her job, another is unable to pay his mortgage and a third is disappointed because of a rise in tax rates. The Labour Party could have just taken this broadcast and rooted it firmly in the present, and they'd have had a perfect portrayal of what the Tories are doing to the country at the moment. Well, they've had a few other ideas from them; why not this one?

## jo brand's week



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Jo's in 1520



## obituaries / gazette



Hermlin: 'marble outside, plaster inside'

The opportunity – the necessity even – to reassess a country's entire literature is as rare as it is disorienting. Such an opportunity arose when the German Democratic Republic ceased to exist. Its literature survived, but Western critics began to question its value – had they overvalued individual voices simply because it was good to hear them above the slogans? Few writers were spared such scrutiny by Stephan Hermlin.

More urgent questions involving more than the inappropriateness of literary judgement, came to be asked when Stasi (State Security) files were opened, unmasking writers great and small as collaborators. Again Hermlin was spared – this member of the literary establishment, friend of the ideologue President of the Writers' Union, Hermann Kant, friend too of the country's leader, Erich Honecker, was not working with the Stasi; he was indeed being watched by them.

Yet here the puzzles begin – and the controversies. When the East German writer Joachim Walther was preparing his recently published giant documentation of writers and the Stasi, Hermlin was one of a tiny handful of writers, out of 140, who denied him access to their own files. Why he refused and what, if anything, he was hiding, has not been explained. In the last 12 months, Hermlin has been at the centre of an exceptional, highly personal controversy. Karl Corno, a redoubtable journalist cum-sleuth, indefatigably hunting out Stasi connections discovered almost by accident that Hermlin had tampered with the facts of his own life, and to such an extent that Corno produced a book with the loaded title, *Aussen Marmor, innen Gips. Die Legenden des Stephan Hermlin* ('Marble Outside, Plaster Inside: The Legends of Stephan Hermlin', 1996). Here too there were no clear answers – Hermlin did not respond in de-

tial to the charge that he altered facts in order to profile himself as a brave anti-Fascist. Again the controversy has not cleared the air. On the contrary, it has added one more enigma to an already enigmatic figure.

And yet, much is unambiguous, not least Hermlin's lifelong commitment to socialism. He was one of those exiles – Brecht and Eisler were others – whose return to East Berlin (he arrived in 1947) significantly influenced the cultural politics and the cultural life of the new state. He had been born Rudolf Leder, of cultivated middle-class Jewish parents, in Chemnitz in 1915. He spent the years from 1936 to 1945 on the move in Spain, England, Palestine, France and Switzerland. His move to East Germany was more than a matter of ideology. He returned in many essays and interviews to the question of *Heimat* (fatherland) and to his own powerfully emotional conviction that the GDR was his only conceivable home.

Rootedness, a seeking-after-continuity, lay at the heart of Hermlin's poetry. His first published volume, *Zwölf Balladen von den grünen Städten* ('Twelve Ballads on the Cities'), appeared in Zurich in 1945 and other volumes of poetry followed during the 1950s. The themes were urgently topical, the forms were, however, traditional (ode, ballad, sonnet), the imagery often classical. It was a strategy bound to find favour with the framers of East German cultural policy, for whom the classical heritage crucially underpinned the building of a socialist state. But Hermlin recognised the risk that a classicising style might become mannered and cloyed – he himself wrote very little poetry after 1960. His own politics and his awareness of the dilemmas of war found more direct expression in prose stories – *Die Zeit der Gemeinsamkeit*, ('Time of Community', 1949), *Der Lieutenant York von Wartenburg*

('Lieutenant York of Wartenburg', 1954) – while at a later date poet and prose writer seem to converge in his most popular art, *Aberdichti* (*Evening Light*, 1979), one of Corno's principal targets, in which fact and fiction, reality and dream, politics and Romantic gesture, combine in a story that shifts between autobiography – a young man growing up in the 1930s and 1940s – and the narrative of a distanced, anonymous observer.

Ultimately Hermlin paid for facing in too many directions, trying to be an old revolutionary while keeping pace with a changing scene. He sought a public role and yet remained secretive. At the beginning of *Evening Light*, he almost supplies his own epitaph: 'Where one asks, others will know no answer, where answers are given, questions will be waiting.'

Philip Brady

Rudolf Leder (Stephan Hermlin), writer, born Chemnitz, Germany, 15 April 1915; married four times; died Berlin 6 April 1997.

## Ellen Pollock

No actress ever flew the flag for Bernard Shaw with more panache than Ellen Pollock. As actress, director and drama teacher, her dedication to the great Irishman was unrivalled.

President of the Shaw Society since 1949, Pollock is believed to have played in a career spanning 72 years, more Shavian heroines than anyone else. She directed London seasons of his plays; and it was during the London première of one of his lesser-known works – *For Fetched Fables* (Watergate, 1950) – that she announced Shaw's death from the stage.

Her dedication to acting began by watching Sarah Bernhardt. Young Ellen was seven. After that, she knew that she herself would be an actress. Not that she had any training or encouragement.

"Everybody said I was much too tall for the stage," she recalled a few years ago, "and much too plain. Why don't you marry that nice Dr So-and-So?" her three sisters would ask.

Breaking into the stage profession wasn't easy either: "There were no agents. Each day you would toll up and down the stairs of the leading West End producers. When I came home for lunch, my mother would say, 'Have you been offered lots of jobs, dear?'

Undaunted, she landed a part, aged 17, as a page in *Romeo and Juliet* at the Everyman, Hampstead. A few weeks

later she shared the stage with Ellen Terry as Herod's son in an Old English Nativity play.

After a walk-on part in the West End, young Pollock spent the early 1920s touring. What fired her taste for Shaw was the Charles Macdonald Players. From 1920 the Dublin-born Macdonald had been sending out companies on tour from London. The Macdonald Players stuck exclusively to a repertoire of Shaw, roaming Britain, Ireland, Europe, South Africa and the Far East with his plays. Pollock was nonetheless a highly versatile player in farce, tragedy, thriller, musical comedy, Shakespeare, Sophocles, Sheridan, Wilde, Dumas, Grand Guignol ...

After West End runs in *Hu the Deck* (London Hippodrome, 1927) and Priestley's *The Good Companions* (Her Majesty's, 1931), came tours and the Malvern Festival, where Shaw loomed large. There, at the première of his so-called political extravaganza *Too True to Be Good* (1932) the critic James Agate recognised Pollock's talent as a comedienne who "contrived to amuse in a thin field of humour, and long after the crop had been gathered".

Of the same play, which she revived in a season at the Lyric, Hammersmith, under her own direction in 1944, Beverley Baxter declared: "Miss Pollock also played *Candida*, in *Village Wooing* and *Eliza in Pygmalion*. Then she exercised a bent for Grand Guignol at the Granville, Waltham Green – short, arresting, blood-and-thunder plays at which spectators were expected to faint.

Five years later, at the small Irving Theatre off Leicester Square, they did. Pollock joined the young director-to-be-critic Kenneth Tynan for his last stage production. The programme included an abridged version of *Titus Andronicus*. St John Am-

In the intervening 12 years parts ranged from Aloysia Brolin in Shaw's *On the Rocks* (Winter Garden, 1933) and Gwen Clayton in the long-running *The Dominant Sex* (Shaftesbury, 1935) to Lady Sneerwell in *The New School for Scandal* (Embassy, 1937) and Audrey in *You Like It* (Open Air, 1938).

It was during the run of *The Dominant Sex* that the spirited young actress made a public name for herself as a jolly matron, playing between Rochester and the West End in a yellow and orange tunic, in which she was caught speeding, and contrived to talk (or smile) her way out of it, allegedly promising the magistrate tickets for the play.

For her Shavian season as director at Hammersmith 12 years later, Shaw sent a message through to her audience: if they did not understand the play they were to sit through the piece again. At Hammersmith in 1952 Pollock also played *Candida*, in *Village Wooing* and *Eliza in Pygmalion*. Then she exercised a bent for Grand Guignol at the Granville, Waltham Green – short, arresting, blood-and-thunder plays at which spectators were expected to faint.

For Shaw's centenary in 1956 she directed and played the title role in *Mrs Warren's Profession* (Royal Court) and in 1960 staged *Billy Bunter's Swiss Roll* at the Victoria Palace, a matinees-only derivation of Frank Richards' Greyfriars School series. In the 1960s and 1970s she acted in the West End in Pirandello's *Six Characters in Search of an Author* (Mayfair, 1963), staged Coward's *Fallen Angels* at Malvern, and Shaw's *Pygmalion* at Detroit; played Madame Claude in Maugh-

balance men were conspicuously on duty and most evenings a couple of people duly fainted, including, one night, an ambulance man.

Among Pollock's other West End productions were the thriller *The Third Visitor* (Duke of York's, 1949) with which she toured Germany, *Shavings* (St Martin's, 1951), three one-act plays by Shaw in which she played Queen Elizabeth in the *Dark Lady of the Sonnets*, *The Man of Destiny* and *Village Wooing*; and *Storks Don't Talk* (Comedy).

Joining Donald Wolfit's Shakespeares for a season at the King's, Hammersmith in 1953 brought out the tragicomic in her – Judith in *The Wandering Jew*, Jocasta in *Oedipus*, and Regan in *King Lear*, as well as Audrey in *As You Like It*, Maria in *Twelfth Night*, Mistress Quickly in *Henry IV* and Mrs Caudron in *The School for Scandal*.

For Shaw's centenary in 1956

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am's *Lady Frederick* (Vaudeville – the shrine to Shaw, to unravel a plaque or give a reading or otherwise pay tribute to the author whom she had first met in 1932 at Malvern).

Pollock was also a notable teacher of drama at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts and at the Webber Douglas School of Acting. Late in her stage career she appeared in television plays and series including *The Forsyte Saga*, in which she played Forsyte's mother-in-law. Film credits, which had begun in 1927 with *Moulin Rouge*, included *Piccadilly* (1929), *The Informer* (1935), *The Galloping Major* (1951), and *Too Many Crooks* (1958). In 1965 Ellen

Pollock joined her sister in an antiques business in Chelsea.

Adrian Benedick

Ellen Clara Pollock, actress, born Heidelberg, Germany, 29 June 1903; married 1929 Captain Leslie Hancock (one son, died 1944), 1945 James Proudfoot (died 1971); died 29 March 1997.

## Jean Charlot

Jean Charlot was an elegant writer, an electoral analyst of stature, a political commentator and the most eminent of the researchers on the French Gaullist movement. His stature in all of these disparate fields is assured but he is known to different audiences for very different talents.

He was born in Guingamp and educated at the lycées there and in Valenciennes. Over a long career, he rose through the Fondation National des Sciences Politiques and, after taking a doctorate, became a Professor at the Institut d'Etudes Politiques in Paris in

1978. He was a visiting Professor at the universities of Lorraine and Liège (where he was doctor honoris causa). He was Secretary General of the Association Française de Science Politique (1975-79) and on its board from that time.

Charlot was one of the first and most eloquent electoral commentators. France is continuously bathed in opinion polls and Charlot made it part of his business to explain these, and especially the trends which underlie them, to a wider public, both through his appearances on television and as a columnist (regularly for *Le*

*Paris*, but also for *Le Figaro* and *Le Monde*). In a country where there are many more academic television personalities than in Britain, he was an IFOP (Institut Français d'Opinion Publique) "poster" and a populariser in the best sense of the term.

Within the French intellectual élite, which notoriously lent to the left, Charlot was an exception: a committed Gaullist and an associate of Gaullist leaders but at the same time a careful analyst. In this capacity he was a pollster on call to the neo-Gaullist Rassemblement pour la République (RPR) movement set up in 1976 by Jacques Chirac

and delivered a number of pri-

vate studies of public opinion to the RPR. Politically activist, propagandist, or polemical academics are also no novelty in France, but Charlot was from a different stamp: a passionate Gaullist but a dispassionate observer, an engaged but objective commentator. There was no mistaking Charlot's reasoned and sympathetic style, which took political matter and reduced it to a seamless and understandable flow of explication without "talking down".

Charlot's works on Gaullism and the Gaullist movement are standards. Yet his broad range

of academic work also covered the analysis of opinion polls, the conceptual understanding of political parties and a widely admired basic text. His work on the Gaullist movement included his *L'Union pour la Nouvelle République* (1967), the famous *Le Phénomène Gaulliste* (1970), translated into English as *The Gaullist Phenomenon*, 1971, and many other languages) and *Le Gaullisme d'opposition* 1946-58 (1983). He contributed to the understanding of de Gaulle with the technical *Les français et de Gaulle* (1971) and he edited *Quand la gauche peut gagner* ... (1973) both based on polling

work by IFOP. He also wrote the important *Les Générations* (1971) and the overview *La Politique en France* (1994). In addition to his journalistic output, Charlot was a prolific contributor to many compilations and technical journals and will be remembered in that domain as an innovative researcher within the rising discipline of western (and French) "political science" after the Second World War.

Charlot was a kindly and modest man with absolutely no "side". Although one of the most distinguished academics of his generation, he was generous to the newer entrants into the

profession and contributed his work unfailingly. His determination to get to a Northern university one year, in the middle of a February freeze-up which stopped all public transport, to contribute to an Institut de Gaule Colloquium, was way beyond the call of duty.

Charlot's last book *Pourquoi le régime* (1995), discussing the 1995 presidential race, showed him at his best. In this he combined insider access and sympathy for the new president with over 30 years of work on the Gaullist movement and his pleasure at seeing a Gaullist once again in the

Elysée was understandable. His discussions (in very good English) of the last two presidential campaigns will be remembered by contemporary students and academics. He was a devoted family man and he was a frequent visitor to England (his wife Monica died in 1980s).

D.S. Bell

Jean Charlot, political scientist; born Guingamp, Côte-d'Or, 16 March 1912; Professor, Paris Institut d'Etudes Politiques 1978-97; married 1936 Monica Huber (three daughters); died 6 March 1997.

## Bishop and boffin crack the curate's egg faith & reason

Church reports on social issues are often rubbishised by the press that it seems churlish to join in, which is why this ageing Methodist curate has got used to claiming that they are "good in parts". But on Tuesday the Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland published their report on *Unemployment and the Future of Work* and it is rather a good egg.

The working group includes serious entrepreneurs as well as advocates of rights for the poor. At the centre of the enterprise was a remarkable partnership between David Sheppard, Bishop of Liverpool, and Andrew Britton, who left the National Institute for Economic and Social Research to head the work – the Bishop and the Boffin.

It was certainly the Bishop's passion and persistence that created the thing. But Andrew Britton has made thus a remarkably coherent and professionally competent report. His case is simple. The argument is complex.

The case is this. The Churches claim that comfortable Britain has left the poor behind, most of all in the area of work. There are less than two million people claiming unemployment benefit, but that number doubles when those who have dropped out of the labour market altogether are counted. Worse, politicians who go to town have to reassure those who are still comfortable. A new commandment have they given unto us – Thou Shall Not Frighten The Floating Voter. So the Churches have stepped into a moral void

lic sector, and the heavy non-wage costs which destroy jobs. It insists that successful job creation depends on "the courage and hope in the future shown in the action of large numbers of individuals and managers. The economy will flourish only if these qualities are nurtured and supported by public opinion and public policy."

This is new. It signals that the Churches have abandoned that self-righteous, complacent anti-Thatcherism which paralysed thought. This document is different. It is much bolder in asserting the virtues of the competitive market. The report's careful, technical argument shows how the market, the state and the people can work together to create more jobs, and more dignified work.

Even so it does not go far enough. It is still more at home in the poverty lobby and the community project. Yet most Christians live in the world of business, making money and creating jobs. The report has little feel of what it's like to meet a payroll or get a product to market. Nobody quite asks the question "Please, Bishop, where do jobs come from?" in case the answer should sound too smug.

The Churches are right to demand that the next government should create a more inclusive society – but at last they are doing so in language that is both moral and realistic. Not before time. Over the past decade our society has shown itself prepared to sacrifice the weakest on the altar of the market. The Churches are at last replying effectively, not least with this shrewd assessment of the virtues and vices of the modern economy, and its capacity to create good work.

*Faith & Reason* is edited by Paul Valley

### Births, Marriages & Deaths

BIRTHS: Sir Robert Stevenson, on 10 April 1997, aged 95, husband of the late Margaret, father of Margaret, Peter and Eleanor. Formerly Vice-Chancellor of the Universities of Otago, New Zealand, and chairman of the Commonwealth Games Council. Son of Sir Alexander Stevenson, 1901-59. S.D.L., funeral 17 April.

ANNOUNCEMENTS FOR GAZETTE BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS: The Duke of Edinburgh tomorrow attends the opening ceremony of the Hanover Trade Fair and the opening of the British Pavilion, Hanover.

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS: The Duke of Edinburgh tomorrow attends the opening ceremony of the Hanover Trade Fair and the opening of the British Pavilion, Hanover.

CHANGING OF THE GUARD: TODAY: The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am. 1st Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Wales, the Queen's Guard, at Buckingham Palace, 1pm. 1st Battalion, The Welsh Guards. TOMORROW: The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am. 1st Battalion, The Royal Regiment of Wales, the Queen's Guard, at Buckingham Palace, 1pm.

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# business & city

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BUSINESS & CITY EDITOR: JEREMY WARNER

## Board clearout continues at WH Smith

Nigel Cope  
City Correspondent

WH Smith, the high street retailer that is seeking to revitalise its core chain, took its boardroom shake-up a step further yesterday. It announced that the head of the main WH Smith division was to leave with immediate effect.

Peter Bamford, who has only served on the main board for 18 months, becomes the ninth WH Smith director to leave the group since its profits warning two years ago. The total compensation bill for the departures will now exceed £1m.

However, Bill Cockburn, who took over as the group's chief executive in January 1996, denied that it represented a "bloodbath". He said: "It is time for a change and Peter and I were agreed on that. He has had a particularly tempestuous year. It is the first year of our strategic review and the next three are about implementation and consolidation. It needs someone fresh to come in."

Analysts said Mr Bamford's departure was because he was too closely associated with the decline in performance of the main chain which culminated in the profits warning in May 1995.

The main WH Smith business

has been hit by competition from supermarkets on key product areas such as newspapers and magazines, books, music and videos. However, Mr Cockburn said Mr Bamford's departure was "amicable".

institutional investors supported the move. One shareholder said: "We think Bill Cockburn has a difficult job and it is going to be a long slog to get the main business right. But there needed to be a fresh overhaul of the management and we would be supportive of what has happened rather than discouraged by it. So far he [Mr Cockburn] is doing all the right things."

Mr Cockburn, who became group chief executive at the beginning of last year, will become chairman of WH Smith Retail while the company seeks a replacement for Mr Bamford.

He said that he was keen to move closer to the main high street business, which has 400 stores, and that the search for a new managing director for the business was "well advanced".

Mr Bamford, 43, joined WH Smith in 1987 and has been running the main retail business for the last three years. He was only appointed to the main board in late 1995. He was paid £18,000 last year and employed on a

two-year rolling contract. He will receive compensation through the company declined to reveal details yesterday.

Mr Bamford's exit is the latest in a series of boardroom departures from the retail group as it attempts to shrug off its reputation as a stumbling underachiever.

He follows the former chief executive, Sir Malcolm Field, who left last year and Peter Troughton, the former head of WH Smith Retail who left with £400,000 compensation. David Roberts, the former head of WH Smith Business Supplies was made redundant following the sale of the Nicelady business last year. He received £205,000 in compensation.

Others who have left include Philip Smith, a member of the founding Smith family who was a non-executive director, and John Napier, the former finance director who retired at the age of 59 last year when Keith Hammill, the former finance director of the Forte group was brought in.

Two other non-executive

directors have stepped down

while Simon Burke, the former head of Virgin Our-Price left last year to return to the Virgin empire.

WH Smith also announced

yesterday it is hiving off its retail concessions operation from the WH Smith retail division into a separate business. It will have its own managing director.

It has 100 outlets in railway sta-

tions and airports and generates sales of £120m. "It has been a Cinderella business. But it is looking that should be buffed up."

WH Smith already has a successful business in the US op-

erating stores in railways and airports. It has recently opened at outlet in Singapore and is looking at opening another in the new Hong Kong Airport.

In addition, the group is

## A&L's share deadline put back

John Whcock

Alliance & Leicester bowed to public pressure yesterday and extended the deadline by four days for members to return forms allowing investors to choose to sell their shares immediately or keep them.

The building society's initial time limit for the return of share allocation forms ran out yesterday in order to keep a tight schedule which sees their first shares being traded on 21 April. Yesterday the society admitted that many forms had reached members later than planned.

The 2.3 million forms posted last month gave members the option to sell their shares or the flotation date via an auction conducted by Cazenove. But thousands of members complained as the clock ran out this week that they had not received forms, had been unable to get through on A&L's flotation hotline or had been met with "busy" fax machines.

A&L responded yesterday by extending the time for forms to be returned until 15 April. It said it was "extending its opening hours for enquires to 8am-5pm Mondays to Fridays, and the Flotation Information Office will continue to be open 9am-midday on Saturdays. The number of staff answering telephones and responding to mail has also been increased."

An A&L spokesman yesterday said that a "very encouraging" 92 per cent of the allocation forms had already been sent back by members.

The spokesman also pointed out that of the four big building societies demutualising this year, "we started the process last and are finishing it first".

Halifax, for instance, has 8.5 million potential shareholders and declared its intention to convert more than 18 months ago. It will be sending out its first share allocation forms in 10 days' time. Shares in Halifax start dealing in early June.

A&L blamed the delay in members receiving forms on a combination of the Easter break and the high volume of similar mailings at the same time.

The society said that members who were never shareholders before were keen to find out what was involved, and that A&L had received "a number of questions about the flotation of the Halifax and Woolwich, as well as its own".

This year's crowded schedule for flotation has already caused the Post Office problems, which can only guarantee to deliver 98.8 per cent of mail posted.

## Shares in Zeneca sent 35p higher on Roche bid rumours

Magnus Grimond

Shares in Zeneca, the UK's third-largest drug group, jumped yesterday on renewed speculation that Roche of Switzerland was about to launch a bid worth up to £21bn. The shares, which ended 35p up at £18.51 after being as much as 45.5p higher at one stage, were further boosted by news that Zeneca had beaten off a US patent challenge mounted against its Novadex breast cancer drug, the group's fifth best-selling product.

The bid rumour, the latest in a long series, emerged in a report in a Swiss newspaper which suggested that an offer worth £21 to £22 a share would be launched by Roche early next week. *Cash*, a weekly financial

publication, claimed the two companies were in talks and the Basel-based Roche planned to sell off Zeneca's agrochemicals and specialty chemicals operations, keeping only the drug business.

Neither company would comment yesterday. A representative for Roche said: "We've heard the rumours before and we didn't comment then and we are not commenting now."

The Swiss company has substantial cash resources and is thought to be interested in making acquisitions, but analysts played down the latest twist to what has become a long-running saga. James Dodwell, a pharmaceuticals watcher at Barclays de Zoete Wedd, said the two companies would fit together reasonably well. Roche had a lot

of hospital products, while Zeneca's portfolio was strong in drugs targeted at GPs. Zeneca also had a strong franchise in cancer treatments, which Roche lacked, he suggested.

But he said: "Zeneca won't go freely. They want to remain independent and have said they are going to achieve 15 per cent per annum earnings growth for the next five years. Even for Roche, the possible \$35bn price tag for the British group would be hard to digest, while the rating might be hard to justify."

The one piece of tangible good news yesterday for Zeneca, headed by chief executive Sir David Barnes, was

that an US appeal court had upheld its patent rights over Novadex, still the most widely used treatment for breast can-

cer nearly quarter of a century after its launch. The appeal to the Federal court followed a challenge by Novopharm, a Canadian maker of generic drugs, which had been thrown out by a lower court in Maryland last April. Zeneca said the decision disposed of the proceedings initiated by Novopharm, which had wanted to produce a generic form of the drug.

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## String of big deals resurrects commercial property sector

Tom Stevenson  
City Editor

The commercial property market's return to strength was confirmed yesterday by a clutch of deals, including a £25m purchase by Great Portland Estates, and a report that John Ribble's British Land was planning the West End's biggest development in decades. Yesterday's announcements follow a raft of surveys showing improvements in letting activity and a return to the speculative development schemes that companies had shunned since the last property boom.

The Virgin bid is being made

with the Bhekizulu consortium of six black empowerment companies. Providing the consortium has pre-qualified it will submit a non-binding offer and then a final offer. The South African government is being advised on the sale by BOE NatWest.

leaseholds on the Bond Street properties Clarendon House, a 56,700 square foot development of retail and office space, and Bond Street House, a 29,500 square foot development.

But the strongest sign so far of improving confidence in the central London property market has been provided by British Land's John Ribble, who has laid out plans for a 2 million square foot scheme at its Euston Centre site. Original plans for the development were for a scheme only half as large.

He launched the latest phase of the development this week, a building that has been half let to the First National Bank of Chicago, with a bullish assessment of its prospects. "If you look at the site then it is a very realistic proposal. It has the best transport links in London with

five underground stations within easy walking distance, excellent access to Heathrow Airport and it will soon have the Eurostar link at St Pancras. I do not know of a better location in London."

His enthusiasm matches the optimism expressed recently by a wide range of property developers, including Hammerson, which has announced ambitious plans to redevelop the Bull Ring shopping centre in Birmingham, and Chelsfield, which is

stepping up plans to develop the area around Paddington Basin.

British Land is also active in the City, where it owns the Broadgate office complex around Liverpool Street station and has submitted extensive plans to redevelop its long-term holding Plantation House on Fenchurch Street.

After years in the doldrums, the property sector has sprung to life again this year, with many developers from the last property boom returning to the market and big deals, such as the aborted takeover of MEPC by Hammerson, being mooted. For the first time in years, quoted property companies are trading at premiums to the underlying value of their assets.

Other smaller deals in the sector announced yesterday included the acquisition by Persimmon of 23 acres of building land near York for £6.3m, the sale by Edge Properties of a Darlington retail warehouse to Scottish Amicable for £3.45m and the purchase by McKay Securities of a portfolio of properties from General Accident for £8.6m.

### IN THE LONG WEEKEND

Excessive pension charges – put them high in the next government's In-tray.  
Don't sell your building society windfalls straight away.  
How to bet on the election outcome.

Self-assessment – how to win the game with no prizes.

Are mutual insurers the next boomerang?

Tax cuts and tax hikes – who got what?  
All in today's Long Weekend section, pages 24-30.

### UNIT TRUST PRICES

Today's full listing appears in the Long Weekend, page 26.

## Shares fall on fears of US inflation

David Osborne and Tom Stevenson

Shares fell on both sides of the Atlantic yesterday after stronger than expected economic figures in the US fanned fears that American interest rates are set to rise next month. The FTSE 100 index of leading shares closed 42.5 points lower at 4,207.7, dragged down by tumbling prices once more on an increasingly jittery Wall Street.

Worst hit were interest rate sensitive stocks like the banks and companies with large shareholder bases in the US such as BP, Glaxo Wellcome and SmithKline Beecham. One analyst said: "The perception that the Fed only has to make one interest rate rise has eroded. It will take its toll all over the world."

There was little respite for Wall Street from its current fit of interest rate jitters as new figures from the US government suggested a new and potentially worrying upward spike in wholesale prices.

The data sent the Dow Jones industrial average sliding again, wiping out the remainder of its partial recovery from its recent steep decline. The index has now retreated by 9 per cent since its all-time high of early March.

At the lunch-hour in New York the index was down almost 90 points. It was a similarly doleful story on the Nasdaq exchange which was off by some 21 points. On the bond market, meanwhile, the yields continued to push upwards.

Behind the renewed anxiety were the wholesale price figures issued by the Labor Department. It said that the producer price index (PPI) for March fell



Sir David Barnes: not likely to let Zeneca go freely

## Virgin keen to buy stake in Sun Air

Michael Harrison

Richard Branson's Virgin group is set to expand its airline interests by making a bid for the state-owned South African carrier Sun Air. Details of the offer, made in partnership with a group of local black business interests, are due to be released next week when the South African government announces the list of groups that have qualified to bid.

About 10 bidders are thought to have expressed an interest in Sun Air, which was formerly the carrier for the independent homeland of Bophuthatswana and operates domestic services with a fleet of about five aircraft.

A Virgin spokesman said that if its bid was successful it was likely to emerge with a stake of around 20 per cent. The investment would be in fine with

Index	Close	Day's close	Change (p)	1996/97 High	1996/97 Low	Yield (%)
FTSE 100	4313.20	+20.90	+0.5	4444.30	4056.60	3.74
FTSE 250	4944.30	+4.70	+0.1	4729.40	4469.40	3.53
FTSE 350	2125.10	+8.50	+0.4	2194.30	2017.90	3.70
FTSE SmallCap	2295.62	+4.69	+0.2	2374.20	2178.29	3.04
FTSE All-Share	2055.70	+8.14	+0.4	2163.94	1989.79	3.65
New York	6540.05	-23.79	-0.4	7085.16	5032.94	1.97
Tokyo	17485.75	-217.62	-1.2	17265.80	17303.85	0.89
Hong Kong	12358.70	-57.98	-0.5	13068.24	12055.17	3.38
Frankfurt	3351.49	-7.97	-0.2	3460.64	2846.77	1.59

Statistics as of 11 April

Stock Markets	Dow Jones\*	Nikkei




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A&L's  
share  
deadline  
put back

John Willcock



JEREMY WARNER

The logistics of splitting the licence could easily be enough to make both bidders shy away. Already there are doubts about the commercial viability of digital terrestrial. Force the two together under one roof and the whole thing might founder.

**A** new front has been opened in the debate over who gets the licences for digital terrestrial television. Digital Television Network, the outsider in the two-horse race for the three multiplexes on offer, is pressing the line that the licence should be split, so that both bidders get a share of the action.

In usual circumstances, such a proposal would be tantamount to running up the white flag, and indeed the idea does look a little on the defeatist side. OK, DTN seems to be saying to the Independent Television Commission: "So we're not going to win outright. Why not compromise and share the spoils? We're prepared to accept second best if it's all that's on offer."

Defeatist or not, the proposal does hold some attractions for ITC and politicians alike, for whichever way the ITC jumps, there's a big potential downside in awarding the licence outright to either player.

For the time being, DTN is just a one-man band, an adjunct of International CableTel – all the other participants in the supposed consortium having fallen by the wayside. But if there are doubts about DTN's financial, commercial and programming credibility, they are more than matched by the monopolistic drawbacks of awarding the licence to the other side.

Digital British Broadcasting is an alliance of Britain's most powerful broadcasters, and none of them seems interested in using dig-

ital to develop new product. Their main purpose is to monopolise the new platform for existing channels.

Furthermore, BDB's dominant partner is BSkyB, which already has a monopoly of analogue pay TV and is intent on making its own digital satellite system the dominant future platform for pay TV too. Should Sky really be given the rights to the commercial side of digital terrestrial at all?

Most rational people would think not. The trouble is that these competition concerns form only a minor part of the ITC's remit; its primary brief is to award the licence to the bidder most likely to ensure the biggest take-up of digital, so that analogue spectrum can be freed up for other things. To state that on this basis there's no contest would be an exaggeration, but certainly it puts BDB in a very powerful position. Hence the idea of splitting the licence, a possibility which has won some support from Labour's spokesman on these matters, Lewis Moonie.

Unfortunately BDB has been clever on this front, constructing its bid in such a way as to make splitting the licence in an equitable way as difficult as possible. Both DTN and BDB have bid for all three multiplexes on offer, but the rules also required alternative bids for a lesser quantity so as to allow for the possibility of a split award.

DTN has bid for all permutations – one, two, and three – but BDB has bid for just

three and one. What BDB is saying here, in effect, is that if you don't give us all three then we are not really interested. If the ITC wants to split the licence, it can only do so by giving two multiplexes to DTN and one to BDB. It cannot give two to BDB and one to DTN, the option it might have favoured, given its brief.

What's more, the logistics of splitting the licence could easily be enough to make both bidders shy away. Already there are doubts about the commercial viability of digital terrestrial. Force the two together under one roof, with all the hassle, duplication of cost and scope for personality clash that would involve, and the whole thing might founder.

So my money continues to be on the award of all three multiplexes to BDB and a consequent extension of the evil empire into the world of digital terrestrial. After the support given by Rupert Murdoch to Tony Blair's election campaign, it furthermore seems unlikely that a Labour government would interfere unduly through the competition authorities with the ITC's decision.

Does it really matter if Mr Murdoch secures this important new platform? Obviously it does but possibly not as much as people think – provided as robust a regulator as Don Cruickshank at Oftel remains in place, that is. The main threat to Sky's monopoly of pay TV comes not from digital terrestrial but from cable, an increasingly

well-marshalled alternative method of distribution for broadcast TV. Over time, control of important movie and sports rights will be wrested away from Sky and its monopoly position as a distributor will begin to disintegrate. There are already signs of it beginning to happen.

So personally I wouldn't be too pessimistic about the outcome even if the ITC does award all three multiplexes to BDB. The split licence approach might seem a reasonable compromise, but the ITC rely on DTN to provide the systems, drive and finance to push the digital revolution forward.

We've been wrestling on the *Independent* business pages, between a mischievous temptation utterly to ignore Andrew Regan's arrogant assault on the Co-operative Wholesale Society, and our possibly rather saner newspaper man's instinct to give it saturation coverage. To have done the former would have been to treat this unsavoury little episode with the contempt it perhaps deserves. But in the end we've had to recognise it for what it is – a bloody good story.

Incredible though Mr Regan's attempted stink still seems, it has to be admitted that he is at least creating waves as well as some amusing high drama. Mr Regan is a 31-year-old wheeler dealer of both limited experience and success – so far. The object of his

attention is the CWS's very substantial non-food interests, which he has rightly identified as underexploited assets.

The problem is that the CWS belongs to a grand old mutually owned tradition and though at one stage there were plainly traitors in the ranks prepared to parley with the young upstart, they've since been got at and the movement now speaks with one voice against him. If he's going to do anything, he's certainly taking his time in getting round to it. The suspicion must be that with his allies in the movement now nobbled, Mr Regan has lost his chance.

You never know. He may yet surprise us all. The way advisers are being added to his already-burgeoning team, he certainly seems still to be serious. But though there may be battles yet to come, I rather suspect he's already lost the war. The barriers to entry seem just too great. Frightened out of its slumbers, the CWS is showing signs of attempting to recognise value itself. In the meantime we in the press should perhaps be grateful to Mr Regan. He's given us something to write about in this increasingly barren patch for business news. Here is unconstructed 1980s man meets grand old cloth cap tradition, brass plate tax avoidance against ethical investment, cost cutter and asset stripper par excellence against nineteenth century utopianism. It would have been hard to invent a better plot.

## Ionica complains to Oftel over cable sales tactics

Chris Godsmark  
Business Correspondent

**I**onica, the fast-growing telephone company which combines fixed phone lines with radio technology, has made a formal complaint to the industry watchdog, Oftel, over allegations that cable operators have been spreading misleading information about its business.

The row is the latest evidence that intense competition for phone customers is leading to claims of dubious marketing tactics flying between rival operators. Oftel yesterday confirmed it had received a complaint it had been investigating. A spokeswoman added: "It's something we are aware of and have been looking into. Ionica has been taking the allegations very seriously."

Ionica refused to reveal the identity of the cable company. Oftel

involved, though it is thought to be Bell Cablemedia, one of the UK's largest operators which is soon to merge into Cable & Wireless's £3bn cable group. Earlier this year Bell faced complaints about its poster advertising campaign which lambasted British Telecom's huge profits under slogans such as "British Telecom". The posters were recently investigated by the Advertising Standards Authority.

An Ionica spokesman explained: "We weren't unduly surprised by this development because competition is becoming so tough. We just want to ensure there is fair play across the industry."

The row mirrors a simmering dispute between BT and the cable industry last year over allegations that BT was engaged in a "dirty tricks" campaign to spread damaging information about cable networks. Oftel

said the intense competition developing emphasised the importance of its new fair trading licence condition, which enables the regulator to ban swiftly any behaviour he believes would damage competition.

Don Cruickshank, the regulator, recently moved to extend the powers from BT to the rest of the industry.

The latest allegations to Oftel stated that the cable operator's customer sales representatives had warned that an Ionica phone would be susceptible to the same reception problems as a mobile phone. Ionica, headed by chief executive Nigel Playford, was the first group to launch a phone service using fixed radio access. Though the telephone works in the same way as a conventional fixed line, the signal is sent from an aerial on the side of a house to a base station a few kilometres

away. It then goes into the underground wire network, mostly using capacity leased off other operators.

The Ionica spokesman said the company had received calls from consumers concerned at possible reception difficulties. He added there was no substance to any claims of problems with signal quality.

"They are just trying to put fear into consumers' minds. We brought Oftel into this to underline how seriously we are taking it. Clearly the cable companies feel they are under a fair degree of pressure at the moment. We met with the cable company involved at a senior level last week and received assurances that they'd take the appropriate steps within their organisation," he added.

The row is all the more surprising given that Ionica has not targeted cable customers

directly in its advertising, preferring to concentrate on eroding BT's dominant market share. Though its marketing budget is small by BT standards Ionica claims response to its television advertising campaign has been beyond expectations.

**Fair trade:** Don Cruickshank recently moved to extend the powers from BT to the rest of the industry

Since its launch Ionica has signed up more than 15,000 customers out of about 700,000 able to take up the service. The company, which aims to float on the stock market later this year, has also announced plans to take on 600 more staff.

## Who will be in EMU? The financial markets' view



CITY ANALYSTS' VIEW

Source: Deutsche Morgan Stanley

Date: 12 April 1997

Source: City Analysts

Date: 12 April 1997



# Villeneuve the smoothest over bumpy surface

## Motor racing

DAVID TREMAYNE  
reports from Buenos Aires

Jacques Villeneuve put aside his dislike of Argentina's Autodromo Oscar Galvez, and gave himself a late birthday present by comprehensively outclassing his opposition yesterday. Earlier, Villeneuve's Williams-Renault partner, Heinz-Harald Frentzen, had shaken off a head cold and his much-publicised new boy at Williams blues, to set fastest time, but Villeneuve, who turned 26 on Wednesday, shaded him by almost a second and a half once he got his car working to his satisfaction. Later, as others also dialled in their cars, the German fell to an eventual seventh place.

This preliminary practice ses-

sion highlighted the "Mickey Mouse" nature of the circuit, and despite resurfacing work carried out since last year's race, all the drivers were still critical of its bumpiness. Frentzen summarised the feelings of many when he said: "The bump at the back of the circuit is still so bad that I could hardly hang on to the wheel."

The track surface was also dusty from lack of use, but while that at least should change in time for official qualifying this afternoon, when more rubber is laid, there is nothing the drivers can do about the bumps but grin and bear them, and try to minimise their effect on their cars. Villeneuve achieved the best set-up on his car, while Rubens Barrichello brought joy to the Stewart-Ford camp with second fastest time ahead of Olivier

Panis's Prost-Mugen Honda, Gerhard Berger's Benetton-Renault, Michael Schumacher's Ferrari and Giancarlo Fisichella's Jordan-Peugeot.

Villeneuve's performance followed recent outspoken comments on the dearth of challenge in Formula One circuits. The Canadian, the winner of the Brazilian GP a fortnight ago, voiced the belief that safety levels and circuit changes, in the wake of the accidents at the San Marino GP at Imola in 1994 which took the lives of Ayrton Senna and Roland Ratzenberger, have stifled a driver's ability to capitalise on his courage as opposed to his car's inherent technical strengths. And here in Argentina his cause has been taken up by no less a figure than Bernie Ecclestone, the vice-president of marketing of the FIA, who threw his regulations from five years ago,

into the ring with a very direct comment.

"Villeneuve isn't saying that motor racing should be dangerous, he just says we want more challenging circuits. I agree with him 100 per cent," Ecclestone said. "Since the accident at Imola, I think the FIA panicked a little under pressure from the media and went a bit over the top with changes all over the place. Which was proved at Barcelona, the next race, where we had chicanes all over the place, which is completely wrong and unnecessary."

Yesterday the Williams team announced that its sponsorship agreement with Rothmans will continue for the 1998 season. But Craig Pollock, Villeneuve's manager, absolutely denied the accompanying rumours that the joint World Championship leader has already re-signed for the British team. Such a move would indeed appear to be precipitate in a season in which Villeneuve

is a clear favourite to take the crown won last year by Damon Hill, who was only 13th fastest yesterday. And at a time when the rumour mill has linked him with the possibility of a drive for McLaren-Mercedes in a car penned by the former Williams chief designer, Adrian Newey, who is currently estranged from the Didcot team and with whom Villeneuve established a working relationship last season.

"Those suggestions are absolute bullshit," Pollock said trenchantly. However, other sources within Williams say that, mindful of the flow of the driver market and given the current problems of new signing Frentzen, Frank Williams has already re-signed for the British team. Such a move would indeed appear to be precipitate in a season in which Villeneuve



The world champion, Michael Schumacher, enjoys a quiet moment in Buenos Aires yesterday. Photograph: Empics

## Bath seek revenge for humiliation

### Rugby Union

CHRIS HEWETT

The last time Leicester went drinking in rugby's equivalent of the Last Chance Saloon - otherwise known as the Recreation Ground, Bath - they sent their hosts slithering under the table. Although the West Countrymen have struggled since taking that Pilkington Cup beating in February, the indications are that the outgoing champions have finally shaken off the hangover.

Bath's encouraging 25-25 draw at Wasps last weekend left them with a mathematical chance of retaining their title, but the holders' aims do not add up in reality. It is far more conceivable that they will open the door for the Londoners by calling "Time, gentlemen please" on Leicester's bold double bid this afternoon.

Bath's distinctly unfortunate September setback at Welford Road set the tone for their entire campaign. Add to that their cup humiliation - no other word even begins to encapsulate the scale of a defeat that cost John Hall, their director of rugby, his job - and they owe Leicester plenty.

The Tigers, patched up and smoothed over after a fraught week on the injury front, travel at something close to full strength. Stuart Potter and Will Greenwood are back in midfield. Austin Healey's bad back has eased sufficiently for him to take his place at scrum-half and Dean Richards has recovered from a similar injury to start at No 8, with Eric Miller occupying the blind-side berth. They remain quite a side on paper, but the wear and tear leaves them vulnerable to a Bath outfit motivated by revenge.

A Leicester defeat, coupled with a Wasps victory at the fast-fading Saracens, would just about scuff the title. If that scenario comes to pass, the title will effectively have been decided by a pair of injury-time tries, each followed by a nerveless conversion, scored in two wonderful matches earlier this week.

Alex King's equalising strike for Wasps against Bath last Sunday just about kept body and soul together for the long-time leaders and when Phil Greening's effort condemned Leicester to a gut-wrenching reverse at Gloucester on Tuesday, the Londoners took possession of their own destiny once again.

True, Wasps must still negotiate a banana skin or two, but at least they will face two of their last three opponents, Sale and Northampton, on home territory. Lawrence Dallaglio's side

have advanced to this enviable position with a minimum of noise or hullabaloo but for all their shortcomings up front they have developed an iron spirit to match their stealth.

While some sort of clarity may emerge at the very top, the log jam for places in next season's Heineken Cup will only intensify after today's round of matches. Harlequins have no game, but Gloucester's late challenge continues at Sale.

Richard Trickey, the Sale president, declined to identify the unnamed backers who agreed to stump up £2.5m on Thursday, but he confirmed that a limited company had been formed to purchase the club's rugby arm. By coincidence, the Gloucester membership were meeting last night to consider a financial offer of similar magnitude.

Llanelli would probably trade the lion's share of their precious heritage for such a cash injection. With the very future of their home at Stradey Park the subject of feverish debate, they will attempt to take their minds off an uncertain future by ensuring a glorious present in tomorrow's Swalce Cup semi-final with Cardiff at St Helen's.

With Jonathan Davies joining an already long list of Cardiff absentees - the first-choice back-row trio of Hefni Taylor, Emrys Lewis and Gwyn Jones were ruled out earlier this week as was the Lions prop David Young - the Scarlets start as firm favourites for a seventh cup final appearance in 10 years. Lee Jarvis, the Wales under-21 cap, replaces Davies, who has a leg injury.

In today's semi-final Swansea face rank outsiders Ebbw Vale at Stradey. The All Whites have seen off the Rhondda side twice already this season and had plenty to spare on each occasion, but Garin Jenkins, the Swansea captain, professed legitimate concerns over possible complacency.

"It was a different story last November, when Vale fielded all their top players and beat us 13-9," said the international hooker. "With key performers like Kingsley Jones and Tom Jones back in the Vale side, we expect a challenge similar to the one we encountered last autumn."

Swansons welcome back Scott Gibbs in midfield - the Lions centre has not played since trapping a nerve in his neck five weeks ago - but will again be without Arwel Thomas and Colin Charvis, two more current international first choices. The suspension of the original league after two seasons in 1992 still rumbles; the return in

1995 was greeted with a less than warm embrace.

In the UK, the London Monarchs are dismissed as a failure because the average gates of 12,000 compare poorly with the 1991 throng of 40,000. What is overlooked is that the Monarchs attract more spectators than most club rugby teams of both codes, while many of the capital's Nationwide League clubs would gladly settle for five-figure gates.

Yet, given the activity elsewhere this weekend, the Monarchs' season-opener against the Frankfurt Galaxy at Stamford Bridge tomorrow will not be high on the media's priority list. A similar fate awaits the

Nick Halling on the new season of the World League of American Football

Scottish Claymores, who begin the defence of their World Bowl trophy in Amsterdam against the Admirals today.

Despite this resistance, the World League is making steady progress in its long-term quest for credibility.

Last season, attendances across six franchises averaged 17,209, up 18 per cent increase on 1995. This year, advance ticket sales are close to 50 per cent higher than in 1995.

Perhaps even more significantly, the National Football League's team owners have approved the World League's

business plan through to the end of the century. As the NFL's position looks particularly well served, with players of the calibre of Stan White of the New York Giants in London, Seattle's Jon Kitna in Barcelona and Chad May of Arizona with Frankfurt. All will hope to emulate the achievement of Brad Johnson, who used his experience with the Monarchs in 1995 to land a multi-million dollar contact as the Minnesota Vikings' starting quarterback.

"I am very excited about the 1997 season," the WLAF president, Oliver Luck, said. "Not only will the standard of play be higher than ever, but we are going into the season with a solid foundation after a 1996 season that saw us make real progress."

For the first time, all 30 NFL teams have allocated partici-

pants to the World League, with 75 players spread across the six teams. The quarterback position looks particularly well served, with players of the calibre of Stan White of the New York Giants in London, Seattle's Jon Kitna in Barcelona and Chad May of Arizona with Frankfurt. All will hope to emulate the achievement of Brad Johnson, who used his experience with the Monarchs in 1995 to land a multi-million dollar contract as the Minnesota Vikings' starting quarterback.

"We have a lot of young guns with great arms, which should make for exciting football for fans across Europe," Luck said. "I'm sure the advances we make this year will mean that when the opening game of the 1998 season comes around, we will be celebrating the increasing importance of the League on the sporting calendar."

The anticipation is that if the young guns live up to their potential over the next three months, the World League will become increasingly difficult to ignore.

## Old Boys ready for Reading

### Hockey

BILL COLWILL

This afternoon's Hockey Association Cup quarter-final game at Chigwell will be a repeat of last season's Cup final in which Reading, after a 2-2 draw with Old Loughtonians, took the trophy after penalty strokes.

Several of the key players in that final will be missing. However, the competition is likely to be equally fierce, particularly in the light of Reading's National League championship success last weekend.

The Old Boys will be without two of their three Great Britain Olympic players and a third, Nick Thompson, just back after a groin injury, is likely to play for only part of the game. Julian

Cannock will again be without their Welsh international Ian Hughes-Rowlands.

In their two League encounters this season the teams have scored 16 goals between them with only one goal on each occasion separating them. It promises to be a high scoring contest. In the other two ties, Guildford should get the better of Surbiton and St Albans should go into the semi-final draw rather than Chelmsford.

Reading will also be hoping that their captain, Jon Wyatt, due back from America late last night, will not be suffering from jet lag. The pick of tomorrow's remaining quarter-final ties is the visit of League runners-up, Teddington, to Cannock. Teddington, to

## Novotna's blind spot

### Tennis

Playing under floodlights clearly plays havoc with Jana Novotna's eyesight. On Thursday night it worked against the top seed as she tumbled out of the Bausch & Lomb Championships in Amelia Island, Florida, losing to the 12th-seeded South African, Amanda Coetzer, 6-2, 1-6, 6-1.

"I had a problem seeing the ball since I only play under the lights once or twice during the year," the Czech Republic's No 1 woman said. "I knew she was a tough player and has a good record against top players. I wasn't going to my first serves and was missing many overheads and easy volleys." Arantxa Sanchez Vicario, the

No2 seed, and the fourth seed Conchita Martinez both scored third-round victories on a chilly Florida afternoon to move into the quarter-finals.

Sanchez Vicario won 6-3, 6-4 against the 16th seed, Rumania's Dragomir of Romania. Sanchez Vicario has not won a trophy since May 1996 in Hamburg, Germany.

The sixth-ranked Martinez had a 6-3, 6-3 victory over Chanda Rubin, ranked 30th, in 65 minutes.

Steffi Graf's expected show-down with her successor as the world-ranked No 1, Martina Hingis, has been delayed by Graf's knee injury. Graf has pulled out of this month's tournament in Hamburg, where she could have faced Hingis, who is unbeaten this year.

The Riders will take responsibility for managing the basketball court, with the rest of the building sealed off.

The other quarter-finals pair, Newcastle Eagles (seventh) against league runners-up London Towers, Manchester Giants (sixth) against third-placed Sheffield Sharks, with Chester Jets (fifth) facing Birmingham (fourth). The four survivors of

the series will play at Wembley Arena on 3 and 4 May.

The champions, Leopards, will be wary of their visit to Leicester, where the Riders coach, Bob Donewald, whips up intense support from the crowd, provokes the ridersides and berates the officials. He also has an explosive, unpredictable team.

The Leopards coach, Billy Mims, runs him close in play-

ing the hype factor to the maximum, and after commentator wants to ensure he is on court next month and not stranded in the TV gantry.

Mims said: "The play-off finals are the showcases of British basketball. You want the best four teams to be there and I think that includes us, so it's a matter of making sure we get there."

If Mims is feeling under pressure, Donewald is keen to add to it: "With the players they've got they should beat us by 15 or 20 points," he said. "These games shouldn't even be close."

Whatever, it will be the quickest series. The second leg is at London Arena tomorrow and the third game, if required, is in London on Tuesday.

**61st US MASTERS:** Pictures of triumph and relief as opening shots attempt to find some new tricks for Georgia's Old Lady



Images of Augusta: (From left) John Huston has lift-off with an eagle at the 18th while the veteran Arnold Palmer picks up a birdie at the second and Tiger Woods strolls over the bridge at Rae's Creek on the 13th. Photographs: Reuter

## Time steals away with Ballesteros' swing

**Robert Green** reports from Augusta on the disconcerting sight of a former genius of the game reduced to the ranks of the golfing also-rans

If Seve Ballesteros had played the 13th, 14th and 15th in level par on Thursday, he would have shot a highly respectable one-over-par 73 for the first day of the Masters. But in golf, as with all sports, the word "if" is the cheapest currency in the language. Seve actually played those holes in 6-6-8, which makes for a horrible progression of bogey, double-bogey, triple-bogey.

Shortly afterwards, an 81 was on the card and the writing was on the wall. He was going to miss the cut at Augusta for the first time since 1984, when he was defending champion. A 74 yesterday merely confirmed the extent of his failure.

From 1980, when he won the title for the first time aged 23, through until 1990, Ballesteros had five other top-five finishes and won

again in 1983. He almost acted as if he owned the place. Right now, it seems that someone else has possession of his swing.

While the superficial impression of a round that included 14 pars, including 12 in succession from the second, is of what is customarily referred to these days as a Faldo-esque performance, that would be misleading. Ballesteros's drive at the second was a comparatively feeble high push into the trees which benefited from a kindly ricochet on to the fairway.

His short game, the department which most professionals find to be the most capricious, remains outstanding, as he demonstrated with preposterous conviction during his match against Tom Lehman at the 1995 Ryder Cup.

He took advantage of that break to secure his par, which was just as well since he had started with a bogey and another immediately afterwards

may have had unwanted repercussions. Instead, bogeys at the 14th and 17th, with a birdie at the 15th sandwiched in between, were to be his only other deviations from par.

Maybe the most baffling aspect of Ballesteros's current woes are the specifics of the malaise that bevels him. The one thing he cannot do is find a swing that will regularly deposit the ball on the fairway, particularly off the tee.

His short game, the department which most professionals find to be the most capricious, remains outstanding, as he demonstrated with preposterous conviction during his match against Tom Lehman at the 1995 Ryder Cup.

"I came here because I thought I had a chance," he said. "Nothing happened today, but then that has been what's happened all year."

Yesterday Ballesteros was clad in navy and white, the colours that in his pomp signified his battle dress on the final day when he was in contention. This season, Seve's final day has been Friday. This made it six missed cuts from six starts this season.

As ever, his disappointment on the course was masked by his determination never to give up. He tried on every shot. But after saddling himself with that 81, a 74 represented too many of them. And then there was no particularity off the tee.

While genuinely claiming that he had played better than his score suggested, Ballesteros acknowledges that his swing is currently not a pretty sight. "Right now," he concedes, "it

looks awful, but I have belief in myself. It will get better."

There is no one in the game who does not want to see that. Butch Harmon, latterly Greg Norman's teacher and now the man charged with supervising Tiger Woods' action, is the latest in a line of teachers who have offered their advice. That is somehow both appropriate and perhaps ironic.

There is some sense this week of the passing of the torch. Seve turned 40 on Wednesday. He and his wife, Carmen, had dinner with Jose Maria Olazabal, whose remarkable recovery from injury has further emphasised the fact that Ballesteros is no longer the best golfer in Spain.

By tomorrow night, the spectacularly precocious Mr Woods will hope to have supplanted him as the youngest-ever winner of the Green Jacket.



Seve Ballesteros drives from the 14th tee during yesterday's second round. Photograph: Allsport

## Mapei's cobblestone conundrum

### Cycling

The powerful Mapei team face a dilemma in Sunday's Paris-Roubaix classic as they bid for a third consecutive victory in the world's most demanding one-day race.

Last year the domination of the Belgo-Italian squad on the cobblestones of northern France was such that the team chief, Patrick Lefevre, decided to sacrifice the chances of Italians Gianluca Bartolami and Andrea Tafi in favour of Belgium's Johan Museeuw.

Since then, Museeuw has won a second World Cup and a first world road title, and it seems now to be the turn of Mapei's Italian leaders Tafi and Franco Ballerini.

Ballerini, winner on the Roubaix cycling track in 1995,

showed recently in the Tour of Flanders he was in great shape. Tafi is in form as well and was the bitterest loser last year, coming close to tears after being asked to let Museeuw win. Bartolami has since changed teams to join Festina.

But even though rumours in the Mapei camp stress Ballerini might be the team's unofficial leader this year, Museeuw is also eager to make up for lost time.

The 31-year-old Belgian fell in the final sprint of the Milan-San Remo classic, the opening race of the World Cup. Last week he also found himself out of contention in the Tour of Flanders when the Italian Bruno Boscarien led in front of him.

"My victory in Flanders was so commanding I'm now convinced it can be a good Paris-Roubaix for me," he said.

Sorensen and other classic specialists may be favoured by the weather, which according to forecasts should be dry and sunny. Riders like Fabio Baldato, Briton Max Sciandri

and even the German sprinter Erik Zabel may have a real chance if the conditions make the course faster. Otherwise, specialists such as Ukraine's Andrei Chmil, the 1994 winner, or Russia's Vyacheslav Yekimov should be Mapei's leading rivals.

But the French public would also like to see a Frenchman win in Roubaix now that Gilbert Duclos-Lassalle and Marc Madiot have retired. Another sprinter Frederic Moncassin looks their biggest hope.

Once again, the main names already preparing for the big summer Tours will be missing. France's Laurent Jalabert, Switzerland's Tony Rominger and Alex Zulle, the Briton Chris Boardman and the Dane Bjarne Riis have all decided not to risk their season in one day.

## Tomba target is Nagano

### Skating

Alberto Tomba, the double Olympic gold medallist and five-times world champion, has redbuffed speculation that he is to retire after a season marred by illness and injury by saying he intends taking part in the 1998 Winter Olympics in Japan.

"Absolutely everything has happened to me this year," the 30-year-old Italian said. "I don't want all this to happen again and therefore want to prepare myself for such an important season." Nagano will stage the Winter Games next February.

Tomba, who took a bronze medal in the slalom at the World Championships in Italy in February, added: "I have an enormous desire to start again and in my head I feel very stimulated."

## Hope for strugglers

### Rugby League

Two sides becoming increasingly desperate for their first Super League points feel that they have a real chance of getting off the mark in their matches tomorrow.

Castleford and Oldham have fulfilled all the gloomy predictions for their seasons, with relegation already looking like a contest between them.

But Cas, without a coach since the resignation of John Joyner, have a visit from Warrington that their caretaker, Mick Morgan, describes as "very winnable".

They will have their new signing, Mike Ford, on the bench but will be without their captain, Lee Crooks, who had a minor operation on his knee this week.

Warrington, coached by the former Castleford boss, Darryl Van de Velde, have problems of their own. Injuries to Lee Penny and John Duffy mean that Chris Rudd will play full-back, with Kelly Sheldoff at scrum-half.

Van de Velde was less than impressed with his new charges in their victory over Oldham last week. "There is a lot of work to be done, especially in defence," he said, warning that anything less than a committed performance could give his old club the chance to break their duck.

Oldham hope to have David Bradbury, Rob Myler and, for the first time this season, the hard-working Australian second-row, Matt Munro, back from injury to face Paris St-Germain.

The Paris coach, Peter Mulligan, will have the former Perth Western Reds winger, Paul Evans, available after he escaped a ban for his sending-off for a high tackle at Salford.

In tomorrow's other Super League match, Halifax will be without Kevin Skerrett for the London Broncos' visit. There is also a doubt about the second-row, Simon Baldwin, while Damian Munro is preferred to Greg Clarke on the left wing.

In the First Division, Hull can go back to the top of the table if they win at Featherstone Rovers. Their coach, Phil Sigsworth, who is uncertain of his future under the new regime headed by the former Hull play, Tim Wilby, will be without his experienced Australian centre, David Liddiard.

Sigsworth is consulting a nutritionist about Liddiard's recurring hamstring problems, but says that it is more important to have him fit for next week's meeting with the current leaders, Huddersfield.

## New machine gives boost to Mackenzie

### Motorcycling

Niall Mackenzie resolutely announced his intention to retain the British Superbike title by heading the practice leaderboard at Donington Park yesterday before tomorrow's opening double header, writes Andrew Martin.

Mackenzie's achievement undermined his confidence in the upgraded Cadbury's Boost Yamaha YZF-R6 will ride in the 22-race championship. "I have a brand new bike," he said. "It's to the 96 factory World Superbike specification and a fair bit better than I raced last year. I've got everything I asked for, now it is down to me."

Competition will be intense. The series has attracted five factory teams, with four former champions lining up on the grid. Mackenzie conceded: "It's going to be harder this year. There are half a dozen guys capable of winning the title."

John Reynolds, a former champion riding the Revv Red Bull Ducati 996, closed within four-hundredths of a second of Mackenzie while Team Kawasaki's Terry Rymer was marginally slower. Jim Moodie overcame teething troubles with the new Crescent Suzuki to claim fourth place on the leaderboard, ahead of Mackenzie's team-mate, Chris Walker.

## Scotland through to their first World Cup

### Cricket

Shropshire player Justin Benson, the Irish captain.

Alex Ritchie, general manager of the Scottish Cricket Union, said: "We have been inundated with calls and faxes from people congratulating us on our success."

The Scots have worked so hard for this and I think they have proved a lot of people wrong. We were all up yesterday after the rain interrupted the game but the boys obviously bowled and fielded really well today."

I think it will be absolutely marvellous for Scottish cricket. It is a fairly tough group but we will do our best. It is something for everyone to aim for."

Scotland were immediately quoted at 1,000-1 by bookmakers Ladbrokes and Coral's odds-on favourite.

Gavin Craig, chairman of the Irish cricket union, said: "It is very disappointing to fall at the last hurdle, but let me salute a magnificent effort by Mike Hendrick and the squad.

We have established a real reputation in the one-day game and I have no doubt we can reach the highest level.

"We are almost there already and we can only go one way from now on. We have all been invited to play in Kenya as a result of our ICC performance and I would expect other invites to follow."

Ireland never recovered from losing both openers with only 20 on the board, with the paceman Kevin Thomson taking both wickets. The slow left-armers Keith Sheridan weighed in with four wickets to account for the middle order, including the former Leices-

tershire player Justin Benson, the Irish captain.

Shropshire's 10-wicket haul was the best of the day, followed by 8-100 by Mike Hendrick and 8-100 by Mike Hendrick. The 10-wicket haul was the best of the day, followed by 8-100 by Mike Hendrick and 8-100 by Mike Hendrick.

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## FA CUP SEMI-FINALS

# Chesterfield set sail against tide of history

GUY HODGSON

Stan Ternent, Bury's manager, was undertaking an interview after a shower. "How we lost to Chesterfield is a mystery," he said in January, his disappointment as naked as his body. "I'll show you the video. We played them off the park."

Strong, vigorous FA Cup runs often have insubstantial roots. Middlesbrough were losing to non-League Hednesford at one stage this season while Chesterfield, if Ternent's testimony can be trusted, were fortunate to survive the third round. Subsequent success can erase a lot of earlier angst, shocks can obliterate a well of achievement.

Wimbledon, Chelsea and Middlesbrough have upset the real levellers in English football this season but they will be wholly overshadowed if Chesterfield reach the FA Cup final tomorrow and become the first team from either the old Third Division or the current Second to get there. Cup glory, apart for the very few, is an ephemeral thing.

Not that Chesterfield would know. Give or take the odd goalkeeper, renown has bypassed them with depressing regularity considering that they are the fourth-oldest club in the League. They have never got to the top division and the furthest they had

| WIMBLEDON                           |       |           |             |          |  |  |  |
|-------------------------------------|-------|-----------|-------------|----------|--|--|--|
| SULLIVAN                            |       |           |             | KIMBLE   |  |  |  |
| CUNNINGHAM                          | PERRY | BLACKWELL |             |          |  |  |  |
| ARDLEY                              | JONES | EARLE     | LEONHARDSEN |          |  |  |  |
| EKOKE                               |       | GAYLE     |             |          |  |  |  |
| M HUGHES                            |       | ZOLA      |             |          |  |  |  |
| MINTO                               | WISE  | NEWTON    | DI MATTEO   | PETRESCU |  |  |  |
| CLARKE                              |       | LEBOEUF   |             | SINCLAIR |  |  |  |
| GRODAS                              |       |           |             |          |  |  |  |
| CHELSEA                             |       |           |             |          |  |  |  |
| Match-off 12.00 tomorrow at Wembley |       |           |             |          |  |  |  |

been in the FA Cup before was the fifth round in 1933, 1938 and 1950. It is not so much unusual territory that they will be exploring when they face Middlesbrough at Old Trafford tomorrow as another planet.

Nor does history favour them, as six Third Division teams have

"Our Cup record is dismal," Sean

reached the semi-finals before and none has reached Wembley. Add such exotic figures in the opposition as Juninho and Fabrizio Ravanelli to those statistics and a Chesterfield win tomorrow would be the greatest FA Cup stock of all time.

Indeed the fear of failure might be as large a hindrance to Middlesbrough as their experience is an asset. Lose to Chesterfield and who knows what condition the players will be in when they meet Leicester in the Coca-Cola Cup final replay on Wednesday?

This week will define Boro's season and it is never a comfortable prospect knowing so much is at stake.

Nigel Pearson, an influence of calm at the back, could soothe any sign of nerves but he is likely to be missing with an ankle injury. Compare that with Chesterfield who could afford to rest a good proportion of their team when they met Watford on Tuesday. If ever a club of their status is going to reach Wembley, tomorrow is the time.

Chelsea, who meet Wimbledon at

Dyche, the Chesterfield captain, agreed, "but we can make up for all those disappointments. The thing about the Cup is that it is only over 90 minutes. Just because you are playing a Premiership team it does not mean they are naturally going to win. The pressure is on them."

Certainly, it will be exerted to nullify Juninho and Chesterfield could hardly have asked for a better template than Leicester's performance in the Coca-Cola Cup final last Sunday. Pontus Kaarniemi never left the Brazilian's shoulder and his impact was negligible.

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Chelsea, who meet Wimbledon at

said. "With the players we've got the performances have not been good enough."

Neither have Wimbledon's although their outward impression of relentless commitment could have been hiding mental recharging in time for tomorrow. Since Leicester knocked them out of the Coca-Cola Cup a match before Wembley their performances in the Premiership have lacked something and their last win was on 23 February.

That was at Highbury and if Wimbledon could choose a place to play the semi-final, Arsenal's home would probably be it as they have not lost in the League there since their FA Cup-winning season of 1988. Fortunately, their one meeting this season with tomorrow's opponents ended in a 4-2 win at Stamford Bridge.

Much will depend on how successful Wimbledon are at harnessing Gianfranco Zola. Suppress him and they will be half-way to Wembley, let him free and the season of much promise will come to nothing.

In the year of the underdog the natural outcome tomorrow would be a Chesterfield-Wimbledon final. Logic dictates otherwise, however, although both semi-finals seem ripe for replays. How the Premier League will sort out the consequent fixture chaos without extending the season anyone's guess.

## 'If you play with so many good players, you either become intimidated or you try to be as good. I'm 33 and still improving'

**F**ootball lore has it that this weekend, FA Cup semi-final time, is the game's heartbreak ridge. Get over it and at least you get to play at Wembley, lose and nobody cheers, nobody remembers your name.

An expert disagrees:

When it comes to losing semi-finals, few footballers speak with greater authority than Steve Clarke, the Chelsea defender. Against Wimbledon at Highbury tomorrow Clarke will be playing in his 10th semi-final. So far he has won one. He has lost in the FA Cup, the Scottish Cup, the League Cup both sides of the border, and in Europe.

But all those bitter memories – and some of St Mirren's defeats against the Old Firm were controversial – pale beside the recollection of the one final he got to. It was 1994 and Chelsea lost 4-0 to Manchester United, the biggest FA Cup final defeat discounting replays, since 1903.

"That was the worst," Clarke said over lunch after training earlier this week. "We felt that it was not a fair reflection of the game. We had done as well as them for an hour, it just ran away from us in the last half-hour. It even rained, on Cup final day. That summed up our mood."

The game was marked by two penalties against Chelsea in seven minutes, the second, which put United two up, was not one of David Elleray's better decisions. "That was the turning point of the game," Clarke added. "At half-time we had a chance of winning. That was a penalty which went against us."

This contrast with Chelsea's last-minute penalty in this year's fifth-round replay against Leicester. "I was right in line and when it happened I thought it was a penalty – as you do. The first time I saw it on the television I thought perhaps not. Sometimes they go for you, sometimes against."

Chelsea have also beaten West Bromwich, Liverpool and Portsmouth. Clarke's words in the programme before the third-round tie with Albion have looked increasingly prophetic: "It seems if we get through the third round we normally have a good Cup run," he wrote.

Now Wimbledon await. "They have had a great season and turned us over big time at Stamford Bridge (4-2). We know what to expect. We have to fight to the best of our abilities and if we can do, we are good enough to go through."

"Elan Ekoku and Marcus Gayle have been outstanding. I don't think there has been a better partnership in the Premiership. They are both big, strong and quick. They are a handful to play against and get their share of goals. You can't ask any more of your front men."

Both sides have lost form recently, with Chelsea's stomp prompting Clarke to tell his team-mates a few home truths after the mid-week defeat at Coventry. Clarke, the club captain, was frustrated at the recent under-achievement of a potentially fine side.

"The team is now better equipped than in 1994. We had good players then but we have improved the quality of the team, we have good international experience. It is the best team I have played at in Chelsea."

There have been a few to choose from since Clarke signed from St Mirren in 1986-1987

**C**helsea's club captain talks to Glenn Moore about a decade of change at the Bridge

(typically the Paisley club won the Scottish Cup later that season). Not only is he the club's longest-serving player – none of the squad he began with are even in the Premiership.

There have been six managers and about

600 players. There is always a high turnover at a football club though not normally so many managers," Clarke said.

"There was a time when I thought about moving on. It was under Bobby Campbell and I was not in the side. The club didn't let me go and I'm still here. I never really wanted to leave. I always enjoyed it here and now I'm in a team which makes the struggles of the early years worthwhile. It is a reward for persistence."

"The turnaround in the last four years has been incredible. When Glenn Hoddle came the club seemed to move on to a different level. Although I have not actually moved it feels as though I have joined another club."

**I**'ve always enjoyed it here, and now I'm in a team which makes the struggles of the early years worthwhile'

"The ground will be great when it is finished. I remember when the chairman first spoke about the plans and put the stadium model in reception. I thought, 'I won't see that in my time here,' but I'm getting there. I've another two years on my contract so there's every chance I'll play at the Bridge when it's completed."

Changes off the pitch have been matched on it. Clarke has survived and prospered through Chelsea's adoption of a Continental style of play and he has had an excellent season on the left of Chelsea's back three.

"I'm enjoying it. The change started under Glenn, he wanted us to start to get the ball down and knock it about. It progressed under Ruud Gullit. The continental players won't tolerate it if you give the ball away. It makes you concentrate. If you play with good players you either become intimidated or say 'I want to be as good, I want to learn.' I chose the latter. I am 33 and still improving."

Clarke was a conventional right-back when Hoddle came. "He changed it to the wing-back system with me on the right and I was not as comfortable. I felt I had more to offer as a defender than an attacker. Plus I'm getting on – once you get the wrong side of 30 you don't want to be doing 80-yard runs all the time and there is a lot of physical effort involved."

"Then Glenn signed Dan Petrescu and a lot of people thought 'that's Clark out'. Glenn pulled me aside and said, 'this is not the end of your career, I want you to play on the right-hand side of a back three'. But I was injured at the time and Michael Duberry came in and did great. Suddenly I was thinking, 'I'm not going to get in there either'."

"Then Andy Myers got injured on the left. I got the chance and took it. Being right-footed makes it easier to cover the centre but I did go out against the kicking board and ping away with the left foot for a while just to get it swinging right."

"I thought his strength was his defending," Hoddle recalled this week. "I also wanted to have full-backs in those positions so they would be comfortable if they were pulled wide. He has done very well. He was receptive to new ideas."

If Clarke's development is a good argument for the introduction of foreign players, so was the scene at Chelsea's Heathrow training ground. After Gullit ended the official session, Gianluca Viali went off to do some sprint training with Ade Mafe (the former British athlete who is now Chelsea's fitness coach), Dan Petrescu did some dribbling and Gianfranco Zola practised volleying with Frode Grodias. Clarke led a few players on a jog round the perimeter.

"You see these players come over here and they earn a lot of money and are top quality players, but they don't just train and go home. They are prepared to stay, do a little bit extra and work on something in their game. The Italians believe if you are not training you lose your conditioning. We tend to play so many matches we just have a rest then get ready for the next one. They are still prepared to do the conditioning work. That was an eye-opener."

"When I started playing, the manager just said 'that's it, get changed and go home'. It wasn't open for debate. This morning Ruud said you're finished and it was 30 to 40 minutes before a lot of the players came in. Of course, it was a nice day, but if it's raining you'll still find 12 to 15 people doing their exercises in the gym."

Clarke's form might prompt thoughts of a Scotland recall but, though he has been watched this season by Craig Brown, he has given up hopes of adding to his six caps. The last, against the Netherlands in 1993, also marked the end of Gullit's international career. "He chose to retire, I was retired," Clarke said. "I don't think there is any chance of a recall. You never say never but there is no reason for him to change it. They have lost two goals in 15 internationals. I'm not bitter about it. It just happens. The problem is scoring goals not conceding them and he won't be calling me up for my goalscoring."

Indeed not. Clarke, having been narrowly robbed of a goal against Portsmouth by Dennis Wise, last scored against Queen's Park Rangers in April 1992. "For a long time I didn't go up for corners so I was not likely to score. This year I have, and I've had four or five good attempts. With a little bit of luck they could have been a goal. I haven't given up. I might not get another international cap but I'm pretty sure I'll get another goal."

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**No 213** **Middlesbrough**  
**FAN'S EYE VIEW**  
Andy Smith

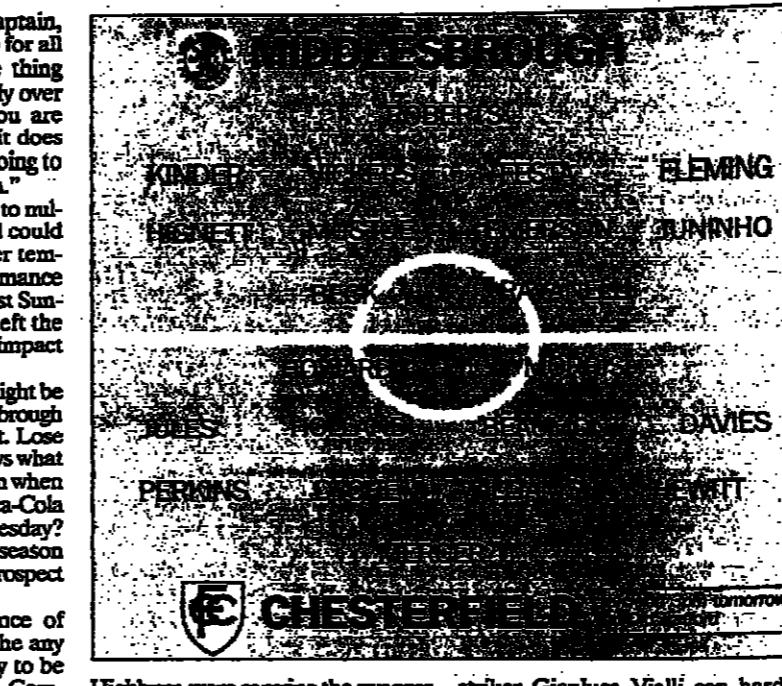
Gammon has signed on a free transfer" or "Gary Parkinson has passed a late fitness test for the Zenith Data Systems Cup tie with Port Vale" would have us muttering away with excitement, proudly sporting our Heritage Hampers sponsored shirts and squinting at smugged copies of the Evening Gazette to

see how the reserves got on at Doncaster. Now a quick scan in the paper shop means blast of the group of kids clad in Man Utd and Liverpool shirts with the words: "Juninho to Atletico/Valecia", "Points docked as Boro go bottom", "Ravanelli to Emerson's in Rio", "Robbie

Mustoe in sprained ankle shock". And that's just *Gazette Dello Sport*. There were over 200 of us pre-Robson and the newcomers have joined after hearing of us through people like the actor Steve Tompkinson of *Drop Dead Donkey* and *Ballykissangel* fame, who warned Boro hearts when he insisted his character, Father Peter Clifford, chastised a group of kids clad in Man Utd and Liverpool shirts with the words: "Hey, remember, Middlesbrough rule OK". Critics taunt us that there were only 4,000 at Hartlepools first home game of the 1986/87 season or that in Lennie Lawrence's twilight months only 8,000 turned up at Ayresome to watch Bolton in 1993. You won't find the tens of thousands who have recently queued for cup tickets claiming to have been there. They were sat at home cursing their luck at having the Boro heritage passed on to them by generations who have always been let down by a club who, in the words of our Harry Pearson, "had displayed a capacity for self-destruction that would have drawn gasps of admiration from a roomful of kamikaze pilots."

When the Boro have looked anything like breaking out of the mediocrity the support has been huge, only to be broken by pitiful defeats in crucial cup ties or, in the case of two of the greatest sides, in 1913 and 1939, war being declared. We may have no fingernails, cash or nerves left by 17 May but we would rather have all this than sit in mid-table boredom. Alan Hansen may not understand that, but who cares?

Boro exiles can contact MSS at 3 Garland Court, Victoria Street, St Albans, Herts AL1 2SY



Steve Clarke: Has had an excellent season on the left of Chelsea's back three

Photograph: Allsport

Last Sunday Middlesbrough fans watched the history of our club being rewritten as the team walked on to the Wembley pitch for the first time in a major final. Amazingly, we'll do it again at Old Trafford tomorrow as Boro play their first FA Cup semi-final.

In 1975, a handful of Boro fans met together on the steps of the players' entrance at Arsenal to form Middlesbrough Supporters South. All fully rounded in the history of a century of mediocrity, if you had suggested to them that the next 22 years would feature three defeats in the FA Cup quarter-

finals, two setbacks in League Cup semi-finals, four relegations including a season back in Division Three, and losing the lead with three minutes to go in the only real cup final we ever reached in 121 years, they would all have responded: "bloody typical", which still stands today as the unofficial motto of MSS.

If you had then gone on to say that you predicted that Boro would also go bankrupt, then reach the top division within two years they may have started to inch away from you. But when you told them that Boro would leave Ayresome

park for a stunning new all-seater stadium, buy an England striker, an Italian international who had just scored the winning goal in the European Cup final and a Brazilian star who Pele described as the best player in the world, they would have called for the straitjackets.



**Case for the defence**

Chelsea's Steve Clarke talks to Glenn Moore about his FA Cup semi-final hopes, page 30

**sport****Running man**

Paul Evans tells Mike Rowbottom about his London Marathon challenge, page 26

**In Monday's 28-page sports supplement**

**THE FA CUP SEMI-FINALS**  
Glenn Moore and Phil Shaw report on who will make it to Wembley

**THE MASTERS**  
Andy Farrell and Robert Green report on the final round in Augusta

**THE ARGENTINIAN GRAND PRIX**  
David Tremayne on the latest round of Formula One championship

**THE LONDON MARATHON**  
Mike Rowbottom on the event which brings together amateurs and professionals

**THE MONDAY INTERVIEW**  
At home with the top receptionist trainer... Merlin Peacock

**Bladon races to join ranks of green men****Golf**

ANDY FARRELL  
reports from Augusta

Grateful that Augusta National was playing at less than its most fearsome, as it did on Thursday, Warren Bladon took advantage with a second-round 72. At seven over, the continuing presence of the British Amateur champion in the 61st US Masters was in the hands of the cut. Similarly, his switch to the professional ranks, when the unemployed Midlander can start paying off the £7,000 it has cost to bring six of his family and friends out here, was either going to come today or on Monday.

Bladon, when he had a birdie on the second on Thursday, was briefly the leading European but he came home in 42 for a 79. Yesterday, with the greens slightly slower and the pins not tucked away on ski-jump like slopes, Bladon decided to take

whatever came his way. "I thought I needed a couple under today to make the cut, but I wanted to take it easy and not chase the birdies as I did yesterday," Bladon, who was in line for low amateur honours, said.

"I am pleased with a level-par round. Before you come here you worry that you are going to make a fool of yourself, but I saw Greg Norman yesterday have a three-foot par putt, and then a 35-footer for bogey, so it happens to everyone. I would love to play the course again, but I have had a great week and played with some nice people. It beats working for a living."

Albeit with one proviso: Palmer defended the way the course was set up on a bizarre opening day. The first round scoring average was 76.09, the highest since 1988 and the fifth highest since 1960. "The course played as it used to 40 years ago," Palmer said.

"The ball always used to bounce on the greens. In recent years players have got used to soft greens where the ball stops. The only difference is that the speed of the greens did not used to be fast. Is it playable? There's a young man who shot 50 for the back nine so, yes, it's playable."

When Tiger Woods went to the turn in 40, he seemed to be struggling like everyone else. There was no sign he was about to return his first sub-par round in seven outings around the National. Then, he tightened up his swing and made his playing partner, the three-times champion Nick Faldo, look merely mortal with his 75. Woods was only one shot outside Mark Calcavecchia's back nine record of 29.

Faldo, like the vast majority of the field, never came to terms with the greens. Woods, meanwhile, did not look like he was facing "potential disaster on every shot and every putt," as

By the time the four-times winner got to the 18th, the scoreboards were not displaying his score.

Palmer, 67, underwent surgery for prostate cancer earlier in the year and the only figures that interest him were from the tests he took last week which came back clear. "I didn't want to make a big deal out of playing here, because others have been through what I have been through, but if I can be an inspiration to others, that's fine," Palmer said.

The ball always used to bounce on the greens. In recent years players have got used to soft greens where the ball stops. The only difference is that the speed of the greens did not used to be fast. Is it playable? There's a young man who shot 50 for the back nine so, yes, it's playable."

When Tiger Woods went to the turn in 40, he seemed to be struggling like everyone else. There was no sign he was about to return his first sub-par round in seven outings around the National. Then, he tightened up his swing and made his playing partner, the three-times champion Nick Faldo, look merely mortal with his 75. Woods was only one shot outside Mark Calcavecchia's back nine record of 29.

Faldo, like the vast majority of the field, never came to terms with the greens. Woods, meanwhile, did not look like he was facing "potential disaster on every shot and every putt," as



Nowhere to hide: Jack Nicklaus drives off the third tee during the second round at Augusta yesterday

Photograph: Stephen Munday/Allsport

Colin Montgomerie had said after his 72. Woods proved that it is still possible to overpower the course, as Jack Nicklaus used to do in the 60s and 70s. Faldoesque precision is still important, but so much easier to achieve when you are hitting a pitching wedge into the par-five 15th and a half wedge into the 17th. Woods's drive at the 15th was 352 yards and meant he could hit a full wedge shot from a flat lie. His approach stopped four feet from the hole and he sunk that for an eagle.

The turnaround started at the 10th, where the 21-year-old holed from 15 feet. At the short 12th, he chipped in from behind the green and the par-five 13th was a two-putt birdie. With the 12-foot birdie putt at the 17th, Woods found himself fourth be-

hind John Huston, Paul Stankowski and Paul Azinger.

Despite Woods's dramatics, he did not take the headline in yesterday's *Augusta Chronicle*. "Hinston, the eagle has landed," the paper reported. With one of the last blows of the day, Huston, from almost on the 10th fairway after his drive hit a tree, holed his five-iron shot at the 18th from 190 yards. It was only the fourth two at the closing hole in Masters history.

"There was quite an adrenaline rush," Huston, all of whose three US Tour wins have come in Florida, said. "Then there was the relief of not having to put."

It was not his only piece of fortune in his five-under 67. At the 15th, he sliced his drive but it hit a buggy and rebounded onto the fairway. Then his second shot,

which pitched on top of the bank at the front of the green, stopped its inevitable descent into the water at the bottom of the slope, right on the hazard line.

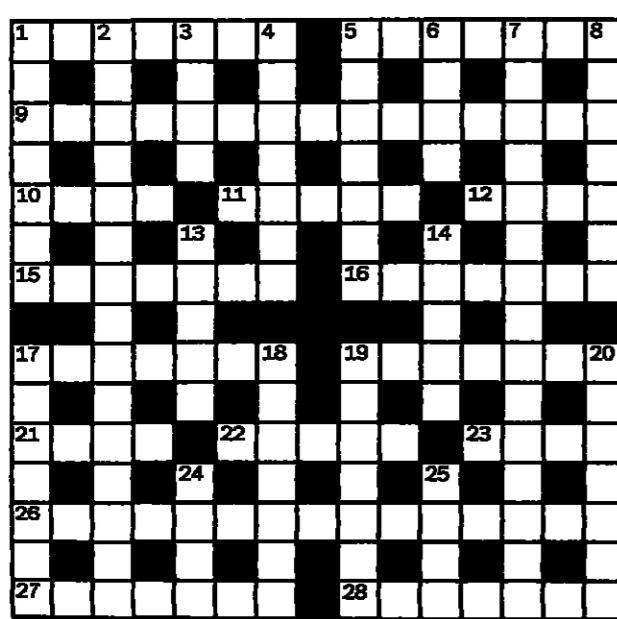
US MASTERS (Augusta): Early second-round scores (US times stated): 185 S Ballesteros (89) 62, 77, 70, 70; J. Ballesteros (89) 62, 77, 70, 70; S. Jones (82) 72, 74, 69, 69; C. Cooley (83) 77, 73, 73; K. Green (87) 74, 74, 68, 68; R. Roberts (85) 77, 73, 73; G. Brewer (84) 79; J. M. Miller (82) 62, 61, 176; D. Palmer (85) 67, 179; D. Ford (85)

\* denotes amateur; Ballesteros lost in time, page 28

**THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD**

No. 3271. Saturday 12 April

By Phil

**ACROSS**

Friday's solution

Last Saturday's solution

BOTTLEBANK FLOP S E A S I L  
DUSEK E P A S C H I C K E N P O X  
ARRIVED K R B A D I N P  
DEELEN K J M P BENEFITS WANDER  
EBULLIENT ABASH D H D N E S E D  
SHEAR ELEVATION I N E T O  
UNDO T M E MEDITERRANEAN  
CITY STATE REBUS I R G  
CSR LOR STELLATE SPRAWL  
ENNUI TREMULOUS E L N O A I  
SAND GST MANTEL CONSTANT  
SHINGLE IDEALLY I A O E I T D  
GAS CARILL PLATITUDES ANEW  
RIDE TOUCHSTONE S E S I N D

S E A S I L  
S C H I C K E N P O X  
A D I N P  
B E N E F I T S W A N D E R  
D H D N E S E D  
I N E T O  
M E D I T E R R A N E A N  
I R G  
E L N O A I  
I A O E I T D  
A N E W  
S I N D

The first five correct solutions to this week's puzzle opened next Thursday. The Independent's crossword editor will publish the answers and send solutions to Saturday Crossword, P.O. Box 4018, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5BL. Please use the box number and postcode and give your own postcode. Last week's winners S Moore, Ipswich; B Large, Rye; M Jepson, Sheffield; E O'Blair, Dublin; L Poole, Stevenage.

**United investors may consider legal action over fixture pile-up****Football**

ALAN NIXON

Manchester United's main investors could sue the Premier League for the fixture chaos that would cost the club at least £10m if they fail to win the championship because of it.

United have run out of options in their battle to extend the season and avoid a programme of four games in the final eight days of the season. United have to visit Leicester on 3 May before home games against Middlesbrough on 6 May, Newcastle on 8 May and West Ham on 11 May.

If United lose the League title, finishing third or worse, and fail to win this season's European Cup, they will be out of next season's Champions League, in which potential profits are around £10m. That would affect their share price and thus the interests of major investment funds.

United are writing to the Football Association to appeal against the verdict, but they are not being given any encouragement. The football club itself cannot sue the FA, or Uefa, the governing body of European

football, could ban them from their competitions next season. However, any of their investors could do so and that fact may be an additional worry for the Premier League in a controversy that is clouding the end of the season.

Leeds United's manager, George Graham, is considering a £2m bid to sign Bolton's midfield player Alan Thompson. Thompson has been outstanding for Bolton in their runaway success in the First Division this season and he would bring some much-needed flair to the Leeds side.

That could throw the domestic game into the kind of chaos the Belgian footballer forced on cross-border moves with his successful challenge to the old Continental system. Among the proposals being considered are free transfers for players over the age of 24 if and when they are out of contract.

"After consultations with clubs we anticipate reaching a common view on changes to the current system of financial compensation when a player changes clubs at the end of his contract," the FA chief executive, Graham Kelly, said yesterday.

The League Managers' Associa-

tion was present at the meeting as observers.

The impact of the Bosman ruling will also be discussed next Thursday by the Uefa executive committee meeting in Geneva, which will also rule on England and Germany's bids to stage the 2006 World Cup. "A definitive statement [on Bosman] may be issued from that meeting which will guide us when we have our next meeting in May," Kelly added.

Diego Maradona was in hospital again yesterday, days after being rushed to a clinic after falling ill on a Chilean television chat show. "It's not serious, it's just a check-up," an official at the exclusive Buenos Aires hospital said. She said Maradona had been admitted during the night but would give no further details.

Argentina's 1986 World Cup winning captain broke out in a cold sweat on a Chilean chat show on Monday night after dancing a tango with former Miss Universe Cecilia Bolocco. He was taken to hospital and diagnosed with high blood pressure. Maradona returned the next day to Buenos Aires, where local media reported he spent the night dancing at a night-club.

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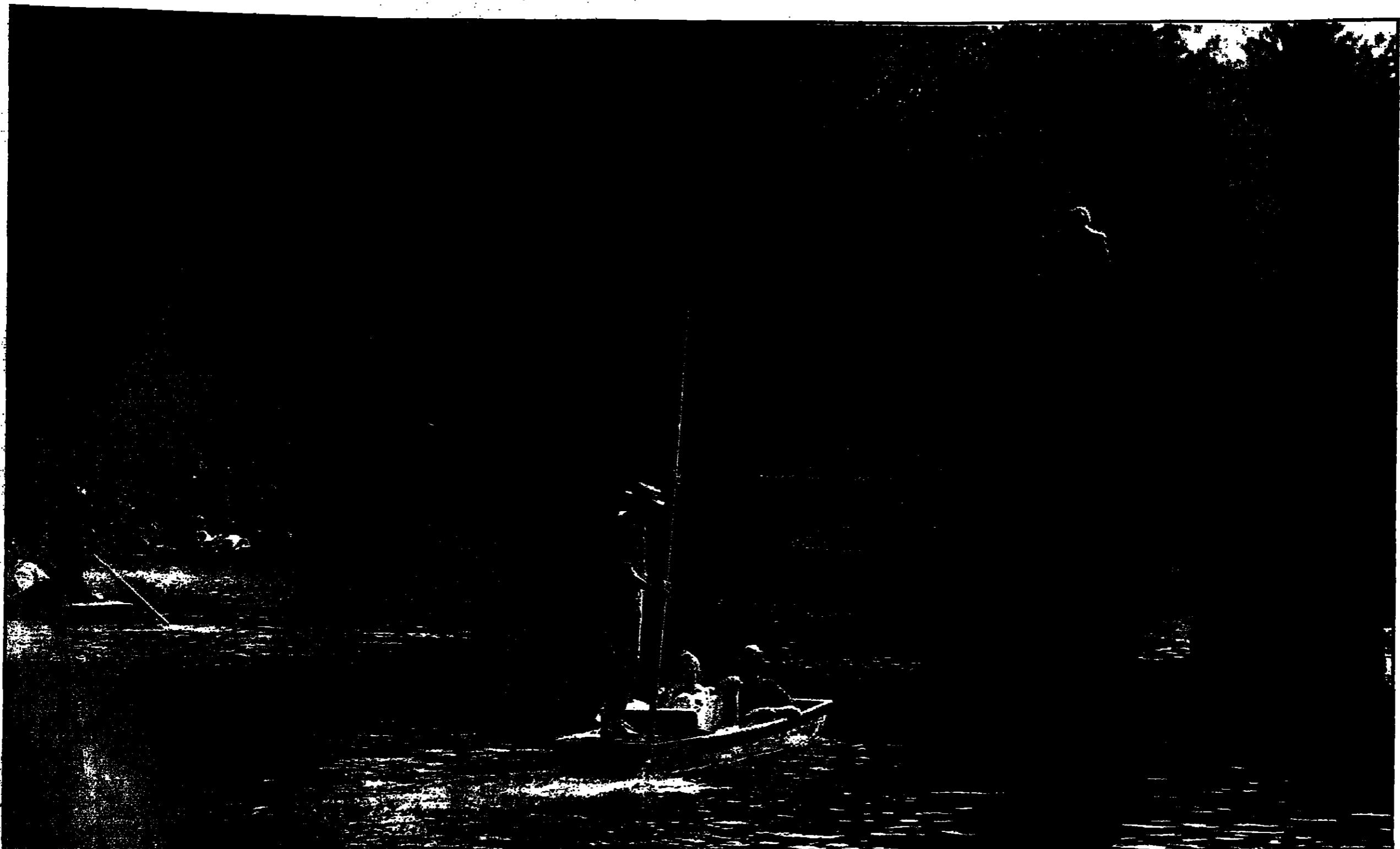
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**IMAGE OF THE WEEK** Punters took to the River Cam on Thursday as the sunshine came streaming down. All over the country temperatures soared, reaching 22C (72F) in some areas. Photograph by Brian Harris using a Nikon F4 with a 180mm lens, 1000th of a second at f4 on Kodak 160 ASA film. To order a print of this picture - it costs £14 - phone 0171-293 2543



# the long weekend

THE INDEPENDENT • SATURDAY 12 APRIL 1997

## WORDS OF THE WEEK

**'The discussion we hear so often in the public arena about crime emerges second-hand from the imagination of your average crime writer'**

*The Royal Festival Hall is staging a 'Crime and Punishment' festival today. Mike Phillips is one of three writers discussing the relationship between crime, crime-writing and society.*

In Britain, crime fiction tends to be perceived as "mere entertainment", a sort of brain-washing exercise for the beach or the boring train journey. For that, you probably have to blame an atmosphere which I'd describe as philistine, an atmosphere which says that if you're going to discuss ideology, politics, aesthetics, and society seriously, it must come from the right quarters.

But, as it happens, crime fiction writers are also novelists, and novelists are part of the argument about how much you earn, where you can live, what kind of education your children get, whether or not you go to jail before you grow up. In some parts of the world, novelists are even imprisoned or killed for precisely that reason. So the idea that crime writers and crime narratives play a role in fixing our ideas about the nature of society won't come as any great surprise. After all, we don't have any problems with the idea that images of violence - the sight of people being shot or stabbed or disembowelled - may have some sort of effect on persons who are looking at such things. Oddly enough, there's no such debate about violent images in books - maybe there's a consensus that being able to read makes you sane and level-headed. But, of course, you don't need to read the stuff to be affected by the ideas and images that come packaged in books, because

nowadays they're swiftly repackaged and disseminated in films and TV and on the Internet.

So it has to be true that the narratives outlined by crime fiction dictate a number of public and private responses, not only towards crime and punishment, but also towards our ideas about how society is structured, towards our ideas about the role and the functions of authority, and towards our ideas about the nation: what it is and who belongs in it. To fully appreciate this, all you have to do is read a few passages from any current best-seller or, better still, look at the nightly parade on TV, because it is the fantasies of crime writers that shape and largely determine TV narratives both in drama and, increasingly, in documentaries and the news. One example of how these different things have begun to come together is the way that the programmes about real crimes have, in style and form, become precise imitations of fictional narratives.

Examine the meanings behind this marriage of entertainment and polemic and you'll also uncover a sort of map of our basic attitudes about crime and punishment. If you listen to much of the political dialogue around the issue of crime, you'll hear a replay of the view that emerges from any reading of the popular narratives about crime: the old story of good against evil. Never mind the debates of criminologists, or the real experience of the criminal justice system, the discussion we hear so often in the public arena emerges second-hand or third- or fourth-hand from the imagination; the fears and the psychodramas of your aver-

age crime writer, which is, in a sense, entirely appropriate, because it's become a vicious circle where our audience has been trained to interpret crime in terms of simplified morality, which politicians can then claim to be reflecting back at them.

This is an equation that makes a large number of contemporary crime writers uneasy. There's been a great deal of debate about the differing shades of realism in different forms, but the truth is that reality has nothing to do with it. It's hard to believe that we get very far with more graphic descriptions of murder or violence or more revolting pictures of one crime or the other. At one extreme, this becomes a species of pornography. Instead, contemporary crime writers seem to be pitched further and faster into the debate surrounding such matters as morality, discipline and all the rest of it. In a sense, this is a predictable movement away from tradition, where, in what's called the Golden Age of crime fiction, the job of the genre was to utter clear statements about the nature of the social order, about the boundaries of class, and about the dangers of breaching certain conventions of social behaviour.

The Prime Minister recently made a speech evoking the nature of Englishness, using the frequently quoted invocation "Warm beer, and cricket on the village green". The unspoken reference evokes a time when everyone knew their place, crime was isolated in the slum areas, and there were rituals, closed outsiders, which outlined and confirmed a specific sort of identity. This is the nastier side of nostalgia for cross-

word merchants such as Agatha Christie, but in many ways it also outlines the central vision of the tradition, and within this outline you can discern the swelling paranoia of the embattled "moral majority", surrounded and threatened by an irresistible tide of alien evil.

For most contemporary writers in the genre, the way that we understand crime, law and order, the workings of the criminal justice system and the intervention of political reality with these things offers the opportunity to reassess and reinterpret the narratives of crime fiction. But there's a sense, I would argue, in which all serious writers face this task of re-interpretation.

For writers like myself, confronted by the contradictions of race, class, gender or temperature, it becomes an urgent necessity to challenge and undermine some of the basic assumptions of the form, in order to create the room for our protagonists to breathe. At another level, it's impossible to summon up new versions of any form without undertaking some kind of critical re-examination. The reading of this is reinforced by the way that we are literally attacked by the slackening of authority, by the spread of information, by revelations and contradictions which are in some way typical of what we know about crime, as opposed to what we believe about it.

*'Crime and Punishment', Royal Festival Hall, London, SE1 (0171-960 4242). From £4. Mike Phillips' new novel, 'The Dancing Face', is published by HarperCollins on 22 May, £15.99.*

## INSIDE

John Walsh meets Richard Wilson page 3



**Death of the hunt:  
the rural impact**

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## To Learn About Wine, Read The Label.

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW PAGE ONE

In the April issue of BBC Good Food magazine, you'll find the start of our new wine course. We begin with a tour of the famous wine regions. And we introduce you to the basics of tasting.

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APRIL ISSUE, ON SALE NOW.

# Games with pen and paper

Why buy designer games, when some of the best competitive pastimes need only a pen and paper? William Hartston reviews some old and new favourites

**A**re you bored with bridge and backgammon? Cheered off with chess? Unmoved by Monopoly? Then why not get back to basics with some old-fashioned pencil-and-paper games. (Far better, of course, played with elegant fountain pen and parchment, which may be purchased with the money saved by not buying expensively packaged designer games.)

First comes noughts-and-crosses or tic-tac-toe. Yes, we all know how to do it: if your opponent puts her cross in the middle, you have to reply in a corner, or if she starts in the corner, you have to go in the middle – and with only the slightest modicum of care, it always ends in a draw. But can you work out the right strategy for the reverse version, where completing a row of three loses the game? Again, there is a simple strategy that leads to a draw, but it's not at all obvious. See if you can work it out; there's an explanation at the end of this piece if you need it.

Here is another game, excellent for whiling away the time on train journeys. Usually called "Crosswords" or "Word Squares", it is also known, among true aficionados, as "Sexy Taxi", for reasons which will soon be apparent.

Played by any number of people (but two or three is best), the

game begins with everyone drawing a square on a sheet of paper subdivided into smaller squares. The starting grid may be of any agreed size, from four-by-four upwards, depending on how long you want the game to last and how many long words the players know. Play proceeds with each person in turn saying a letter,

which must then be entered by each player on to an empty square on his grid. Each player knows only where he himself has placed the letter, not where the other players have put theirs. The object is to score points by forming words, read horizontally or vertically, with longer words scoring more points.

On a four-by-four grid, a good scoring system is 6 points for a 4-letter word, 4 points for a 3-letter word, and 2 points for a two-letter word. Each letter may be scored in only one word on each line. (So "BOAT" scores 6 as a 4-letter word, with nothing extra for "boa", "oat" or "at".)

It's a good idea to ensure that all players end the game having contributed the same number of letters, so with two or three playing on a five-by-five grid, it is sensible to start with an agreed letter already in the middle square. Once the game has started, sneaky players will think of words containing unusual letters, such as Q, X or Z, with which to embarrass their opponents towards the end of the game. Which is why the words SEXY and TAXI often crop up.

Another old favourite is Dots-and-Boxes, in which two players alternately fill in lines on a rectangular lattice of dots with the aim of completing squares. What gives this game an added tactical element is the rule that completion of a box is followed by another move by the same player. Well-played games thus tend to end with one player forced to make a move that lets his opponent complete a long chain of boxes. You can find a detailed account of the mathematics of Dots-and-Boxes in *Winning Ways For Your Mathematical Plays* by ER Berlekamp, JH Conway and R.K. Guy (Academic Press, 1982). There is also a good account of a \$500 Dots-and-Boxes tournament played among mathematicians, written up by Julian West as "Championship-Level Play of Dots-and-Boxes" in *Games of No Chance* (Cambridge University Press, 1996), but you need to have read the earlier work to understand much of the terminology.

Mathematically simpler, but no less taxing in real life, is the game of "Snakes" or "Chains" or whatever else you want to call it. An example can be seen to the right of the noughts-and-crosses board above. You start with two interlocking rectangular grids, shown here as crosses and circles, but it's simpler playing in two different colours. The grids shown here are five-by-four, but any size is possible as long as one dimension is one unit longer than the other. If the crosses are  $(n+1)$  across and down, then the circles must be  $(n+1)$  across and n across.

One player takes the circles, the other the crosses, and they move alternately by joining two neighbouring dots. The object is to form a connected path from one edge to the other in the direction of the longer dimension. So in the above, crosses are heading from top to bottom, circles from left to right. Circles have just won by completing a path from bottom left to top right.

Since this game can never end in a draw (exercise for reader: prove it!), and moving first cannot be a disadvantage, the player who starts ought to win, but even on a relatively small six-by-five grid, the game is surprisingly complicated – and can be very confusing if you cannot find two pencils of different colours.

Finally, there is the game of Sprouts: draw a handful of dots (six or seven is a good number to start with) on a sheet of

paper, then, moving alternately, the two players draw a line joining two dots, or a loop joining one dot to itself. The move is then completed by adding another dot anywhere along the new line. The only rules are that no line may cross another (or itself); no line may be drawn through a dot; and each dot may have only three lines leading from it. The last player to make a move wins.

Finally, we cannot leave without mentioning Battleships. That's the game we all used to play at school, with agreed numbers of battleships, cruisers, destroyers and submarines depicted by lines of squares of different lengths on a grid, and the players naming squares in turn on which bombs were dropped in an attempt to locate and destroy the enemy fleet. We mention it only because a reader has asked if anyone knows its origins. Our researches reveal two theories: 1) It was originally called "Jutland" and dates back to the First World War; 2) It was played by radio operators in the Second World War as a means of ensuring that communications were functioning properly. Can any reader throw light on this?

And before we forget, the correct strategy for losing-noughts-and-crosses is as follows: the first player must start in the middle, then reflect the opponent's moves through the centre. After any other opening move, you can be forced to complete a line of three and lose.

## Games people play

Pandora Melly cooks up a wild newt at Scrabble

Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall, 32, Cook on the Wild Side  
make, but how well you can fight your corner.

Some people have a knack for slipping in dodgy words without a fuss, and at the game progresses, somebody else is bound to say: "Oh, what does 'eff' mean?" by which time it's too late. The really infuriating situation is when you know that your word exists, but you've got no way of proving it.

My father is a very keen player. On family holidays to Cornwall, I knew when it was my bedtime because he'd get out the Scrabble board and play several games with his mate. I'd come down in the morning and there'd be a completed game, a load of empty bottles, and an ashtray bulging with fag-buts. I remember looking at this maze of extraordinary words and wondering if I'd ever know what they meant.

'Eff', from the Old English 'efta', is an old name for a new. 'Official Scrabble Words' is published by Chambers (£11.99 hardback, £5.99 paperback).

## Don't junk it ... use it

How to make this newspaper last 200 years



Someone on the wireless the other day said that it was European paper conservation week. I didn't hear what they had in mind – perhaps it was just a question of printing half a million leaflets telling people not to waste paper – but here are two ways to conserve the more important bits of *The Independent*.

Important points to note:  
1) The cleanest results are obtained with lightly coloured washing-up liquid. For that elegant pre-stained look, use a pinkish detergent.

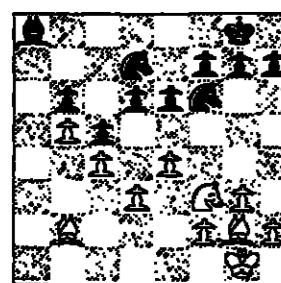
2) Unless you need your message to be read by drivers in their mirrors, you should copy on to acetate first, then reverse it.

3) The design will survive for a couple of washes. If permanence is required, draw over the ironed design with a permanent marker.

Bawn O'Beirne-Ranelagh

The games page is edited by William Hartston

## Chess William Hartston



Here's a piece of grandmasterly technique. This position was reached after 20 moves of the Kramnik-Illiescas game in Dos Hermanas this week. It looks as near to sterile equality as makes no difference. Now watch how Kramnik made something of it.

Phase one: reduce one black piece to passivity. 21.Nd2 Ne8 22.Nb1 Bb7 23.Bf4 Bf6 24.Nc3 Kf7 25.Na4. Now at least the knight cannot move from d7.

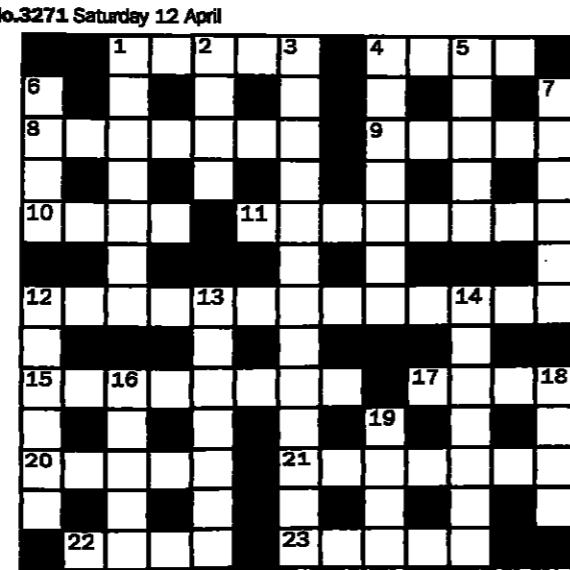
Phase two: advance in the centre: 25...Kf7 26.d4 Kd6 (he cannot let the bishop attack b6 from d4) 27.d5 exd5 (27...e5 28.Bh3 leads to the loss of the b6-pawn) 28.exd5.

Now Bb3 is seriously threatened, so Black needs another way to defend b6. He played 28...Ne7 29.Bh3 Na8 when it was time for phase three: increase K-side space: 30.Bc6 Nf6 31.Bf5 Be8 32.Kf2 Bd7 33.g4 Ke7 34.g5!

Now 34...fxg5 35.Bxg7 is good for White while 34...Bc6 leaves the b6-pawn in dire trouble after 35.Bb6 Nd7 36.Bb7 Nc7

## Concise crossword

No.3271 Saturday 12 April



**ACROSS**

- Plant, source of laxative (5)
- Impudence (4)
- Canine breed (7)
- Big (5)
- Snare (4)
- Worker (8)
- Bank arrangement (8,5)
- Member of US party (8)
- Mark of wound (4)
- Join together (5)
- Unbeliever (7)
- Intelligence (4)
- Went astray (5)

**DOWN**

- Ruler's wife (7)
- Unclothed figure (4)
- Disputations (13)
- Italian astronomer (4)
- Goods vehicle (5)
- Help (4)
- Shooting star (6)
- Chemical element (6)
- Aristocrat (7)
- Resolved (7)
- Indian corn (5)
- Part in play (4)
- At a distance (4)

Solutions to yesterday's Concise Crossword:  
ACROSS: 1 Harassed, 5 Weed (Harris Tweed), 9 Revel, 10 Cheddar, 11 Instructor, 14 Lance-corporal, 16 Ambassador, 20 Worsted, 21 Get on, 22 Eden, 23 Sanskrit. DOWN: 1 Horrible, 2 Revising, 3 Solar, 4 Ecstasy, 6 Edict, 7 Ditt, 8 Recoup, 12 Creditor, 13 Clarinet, 15 Emphysema, 17 Sages, 18 Twee, 19 Free.

## Bridge Alan Hiron

**Game all: dealer South**

|       |              |
|-------|--------------|
| North | ♦J 8 4       |
|       | ♥Q J 2       |
|       | ♦A 2         |
|       | ♣A Q 6 5 3   |
| West  | ♦K Q 5 3     |
|       | ♥9 7 6 2     |
|       | ♦A 10 8 7    |
|       | ♣Q J 9 8 7 5 |
|       | ♦10 9        |
| South | ♦J 7 4 2     |
|       | ♥A 10        |
|       | ♦K 5 4 3     |
|       | ♣K 10 6 4 3  |

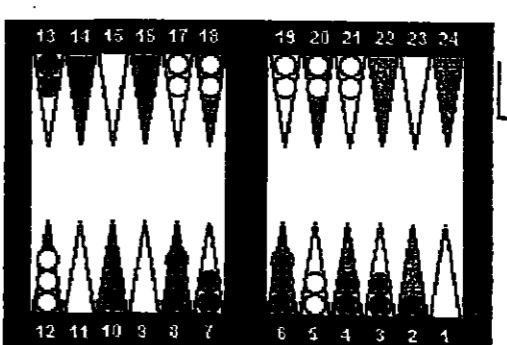
There are a number of suit positions such as Qxh in hand and Ax, Ax in dummy where declarer in a no-trump contract is assured of a double-guard as long as the lead comes from his left-hand opponent. The spade position on this deal was another example.

South opened 10, North responded 2\*, and South rebid 2NT (suggesting minimum values for his opening). With something to spare North went on to game and West chose ♦Q for his

**Perplexity**  
Today is 12 April, or to put it another way, 12.4.97. Now 12 + 4 = 9 + 7 (or you may prefer 1 x 2 - 4 + 9 = 7). Yesterday, -1 - 1 + 9 = 7, and tomorrow 1 - 3 + 4 = 9 - 7. The question is which dates in April cannot be turned into correct sums without changing the order of the digits?

Rules: No zeroes before single digits. Permitted signs are +, -, x, ÷, =, raising to a power, and decimal point. A prize of the new *Chambers 21st Dictionary* will be

## Backgammon Chris Bray



In this position Black has a 5.3 to play. The question is should he clear his mid-point with 13/8, 13/10 or play a waiting game with 6/1, 4/1?

First, let's look at the position and try to work out what is going on. Black has doubled and has a very healthy lead in the race by 98 to 139 before the roll. All he has to do is get those men home from the mid-point, and he will be virtually assured of victory. Should he take the risk now and leave White 13 potentially game-winning shots, or should he sit on the position and hope to throw a set of doubles to clear his mid-point? This is known as a "pay me now or pay me later" problem.

In the late Seventies there would have been no argument; everyone would have played 13/8, 13/10. That was the way they played in those days – the riskier the play the more they liked it.

In the Nineties we are a little wiser than our colleagues of the past, and we also have the tools and techniques to examine problems such as this in some detail.

When the "pay me now" option means the clear loss of the game, as it would do this position, it is nearly always wrong, and this position is no exception. Black does better to play quietly and wait for either a set of doubles or, at the very least, a weakness in White's position which would give him some chances even if hit.

If, for example, one of the two men on White's 5-point were on his 6-point, that would be sufficient to make 13/8, 13/10 the correct play, because many of the hits – for example 5.4 or 5.6 – wouldn't cover the blot on the 5-point, thus giving Black life after death.

We shall return with more on this theme next week.

# A victor, in spite of everything



**John Walsh  
meets...  
Richard Wilson**

**R**esplendent in Beaupre-hued tweed jacket, purple-pink shirt, chinos and a pair of headturning shoes with black leather uppers and thick white rubber soles, Richard Wilson is putting the girls in the local coffee shop at their ease. "Do you do nice coffee in here?" he enquires in his unmistakable stentorian Scots. The girls stand rooted to their tills, eyes flickering in silent dialogue: It's him, the one who plays the crabby old git, what's his name, *One Foot in the Grave*, and he's asking me a question. Oh God, what do I say, I don't know my lines... "Cap-puc-cheen-o?" asks Wilson, his voice fastidiously sorting the syllables into neat piles. The girls look mortified, as if they know that any response will somehow be wrong, will lead to their being withered by scorn, incinerated by Victor Meldrew distaste. "Oh, we'll try next door," says Wilson unforgivingly, breaking the nervy silence, and we stride out, as if concluding a visit from the Gestapo.

You feel for the girls, but you've got to sympathise with Richard Wilson as well. Despite being perhaps the most famous actor in the UK, having played Victor the irascible scourge of modern life since 1991, he has never quite managed to ironise the correspondences the world feels between himself and his *alter ego*. So many tabloid stories, so many people calling him Victor when asking for his autograph or shouting "I don't believe it!" at him in the street, has left him with a short fuse about the Richard/Victor interface. How can people be so stupid as to mistake impersonation for self-expression? How can they confuse him with a 65-year-old early-retired curmudgeon when he is in fact a 61-year-old actor-director of equilibrial tempe and a love of hard work? He just hasn't managed to find a benignly smiling public persona, a Yes-it's-me-but-I'm-not-like-him face that would explain it all in a second. Hence the squirming of the coffee-shop girls.

And he keeps on doing it. "I was in the Post Office the other day, buying stamps and I bought a Lottery card. This woman came up and said, [adopts horrible elderly screech] 'What d'you want a Lottery card for? You don't need a Lottery card, I said to her, 'Yes I do, I'm going to buy my own film company if I win.' And she said, [screech reprise] 'Oh - can I have a part in it?' I said, 'No you bloody well can't', talking to me like that....'"

He makes himself sound rather mean and hostile when it is clear that he is neither. He is warm and funny company. He laughs easily. He talks with reckless frankness about his views. Just don't even think of asking him about his private life. Richard Wilson discourses enquires about his family, his love life, his relationships, home and personal feelings the way, say, Queen Victoria must have discouraged questions about the colour of her underwear.

He will, however, talk about his new venture in the heart of the West End: Monday is the first night of *Zorn and Clem*, a new play by Stephen Churchett, which Wilson is directing at the Aldwych Theatre. It stars Michael Gambon and Alec McCowen as, respectively, Tom Drifberg MP and Clement Attlee, who became British prime minister in 1945 after a wholly unexpected Labour landslide. The play is set at the Potsdam conference in the summer of that year, when Attlee joined Stalin and Truman in the task of deciding the post-war



Richard Wilson, a 61-year-old actor-director who just hasn't yet managed to find a Yes-it's-me-but-I'm-not-like-him face

PHOTO: GLENN GRIFFITHS

fate of Europe. Despite the presence of Daniel de la Faille and Sarah Woodward, it's virtually a two-hander with the leading men representing revolutionary passion and the compromises of *realpolitik*.

So what attracted Wilson, with his shrewd commercial instincts, to direct a play guaranteed to appeal (on the face of it) only to readers of the old-style *New Statesman*? "It's extraordinary how appropriate the play is for the time we're going through," he said. "I didn't know when the General Election was going to be but it seemed a good play to be putting on, about the passion of politics. Where's the passion?" Drifberg says at one point, "Where are the songs?" And at the core of the play is this huge political argument with Attlee saying, "Is compromise such a terrible word?"

What did he make of Drifberg, the Communist socialist, the gossip columnist and radical thinker, the obsessively,

of the world — was, I said, presumably a matter of saying "Do less" all the time. "What I said to Alec," said Wilson, "was 'I want to see how far we can risk making him a really boring man when you know he's not, that inside he's a very clever intellectual, a committed socialist and a party leader.' Not knowing much about the man, you have to start with this rather mousy, hunched figure, Alec, to his credit, will let out a terrible yell in rehearsal or in the tea-room and I'll say, 'Alec, what's going on?' And he'll say,

"Well, you don't let me do it on stage..."

The historical basis for the two men's convergence is shaky but just about plausible. Churchill had left Potsdam to go to London for the election, and everyone thought he'd be coming back. But Clement Attlee came back instead.

Stalin couldn't understand it — he thought he'd rigged the election," said Wilson, wide-eyed, as if the Man of Steel had recently volunteered the information directly to him. "We know that Drifberg was there because he'd just been to Buchenwald, to look at the camps. He went to Potsdam and must have met Attlee, his new PM, there, although we don't know for sure. There's Attlee talking about 'the great task ahead' and about 'remembering our roots' and it all seems very appropriate for 1997."

Richard Wilson makes no bones about his own roots, in the Scots Presbyterian working class, or about the unconstructed radicalism of his political views.

He's been a keen Labour party activist and fund-raiser for years, but one who manages, by his own admission, to embarrass the party moguls. His ringing endorsement of the party's policies.

"I'm a member of the Socialist party and I support Tony Blair" — would make Peter

Mandelson pass out cold on the dressing-room floor. So would his attitudes to tax and education. "I believe education should be free," he says, "and I'd increase the tax on the rich to pay for it. Yes I do mean tertiary education. I know it's difficult to talk about, I know it'll cost a vast amount of money, and it's an unpopular view and one the Labour Party would hate to hear me talking about, but that's what I think government should be about." He suspects that, in the future, all parents will be charged university fees as well as living expenses. "If you're a working-class parent in Govan, and your child tells you they want to go to university but that it may mean you end up with debts of £40,000 — well, they won't understand the first thing about a deal like that. It's just going to become more and more elitist."

It's an interesting perspective to come from the rector of Glasgow University, a post Wilson was elected to last year, and into which he has dive with Drifbergian passion. "It's fascinating to get into a world you've never even smelt before," he said. "But then I stood for election as a working rector. Some people said, 'How can you be our rector when you live in London?' I said, 'There's the shuttle, there's the fax, there's e-mail.' But equally, I made it clear that if someone asked me to do a great new movie in Thailand, I'd say yes." It's turned out much more likely that he'll say, "Sorry, but it'll keep me away from the university for too long," when producers come calling.

Hanging over all this — the rectorship, the education initiative — is the fact that Wilson himself did not go to the university he now runs. His life has not been ruined by this *lacuna*, and the tying-up of threads that the rectorship suggests doesn't strike him as any kind of redemption. "The thing is, I didn't know what it was all about when I was a kid. Nobody told me. The

idea of going to university was something beyond me, something I thought I was incapable of." What subjects was he good at? "I was best at science, which is why I became a lab technician for a while. And I liked English, but I'm not a great reader. I like looking — at pictures, the cinema, I love documentary. But I don't have a literary background." He pondered the long-distance attraction. "Looking back, I think I could say 'I wish I'd gone to university, but in some ways, who I am now is because I didn't go.'

Fair enough. But there's a chippiness about Mr Wilson, a brittleness in the challenge implied by his peacock wardrobe and his over-deliberate consonants, that goes straight back to his Glasgow childhood. The boy he was then clearly

disgusts the man he has become. "I had a huge inferiority complex for one thing," he reveals. "I was a skinny, gawky child. Terribly shy." Were all his co-students robust and confident, then? "Much more than me." Was he good at sport? "I was good at running. But I had absolutely no desire to win." You begin to see how this might have been misinterpreted.

Wilson's father was an elder of the Kirk, and a severe moralist who objected to his son's backsliding. "When I stopped going to church, my father would refuse to speak to me on a Sunday until he'd come back from the service." (Even the young Richard's beliefs were wrong.) Did he believe in God? "I must have done, because I used to pray to him." For what? "To make me fat," Wilson wailed.

His salvation came in a simple form. "The most important thing I did in my teens was to start drinking alcohol. If I hadn't started, I suppose I'd still be in

Scotland. I needed alcohol to give me opinions, to give me the courage to ask people out. Once I had a couple of pints in me, it was a great release. I remember thinking, 'Did I just say that?' Since the Greenock social scene in the early fifties was little unpromising ('It was pretty dire. It was the cinema, basically. Women weren't allowed in pubs at all') Wilson took up dancing, a skill at which he remains famously adept. Tango, salsa, fox-trot and samba were soon mastered; but is it significant that he was relieved when dancing became de-partnered?" It was a great day for me when you didn't have to do any more..." (he indicated a complicated bit of partner-twirling) "... and became a freer, groovy..." (he writhed his hands briefly round his head like Traviola in *Pulp Fiction*) "... when you could do your own steps." Then modern cinema, National Service in Singapore, Rada and a fascination with what we now call "improv", and experimental theatre.

Tell me Richard, I said, all these things you do now which are so much not Victor Meldrew: appearing in fashion shoots in green Bryan Ferry suits, doing the Flora ads on television, cow-punching in Wyoming, directing in the West End, shuttling to Glasgow. Are you determined to show that you're not old-fashioned, dull, grey or Little England? Or are you having some kind of mid-life crisis? He considered the proposition. "I don't think I'm having one of those because I don't know what the expression means. But I'm a great believer in not being old. My mental age is way below 61. I have this theory that, if you start to say, 'You're not supposed to play squash at 61', then you'll start to seize up. The honest answer to why I do so many things is that I've never been asked to do them before." And you could practically hear the put-upon gawky, silent schoolboy, whom no-one even thought of sending to university, basking in an unfamiliar glow of acceptance, half a century on.

Ah, those tiresome interviews with opera stars. An excuse for an album plug or a lengthy tribute to this maestro or that diva. Until... one star, one of the biggest stars, enjoys lunch just a little too much and fires a volley of prejudice and political incorrectness.

Roberto Alagna, hailed as the next Pavarotti, was interviewed in Paris this week. He was asked by one newspaper about the recent Channel 4 documentary *Naked Classics* about him and his wife, soprano and fellow dream-team member, Angela Gheorghiu. Alagna didn't much care for the comments made by first nighters at the Met in this documentary... no let's use his own words as you might have missed them:

"It's not reality, what they

showed on television. Those women who said I was not good. They were prostitutes. From the street. Hah! And that man who said I didn't hit the top C. I know he is homosexual. It's outrageous!"

Now there's an object lesson in how to alienate a sizeable chunk of your opera audience around the world. Alagna hails from Sicily where I gather you wear your manhood on your sleeve in interviews. But I also gather that the remark about homosexuals went down less well at EMI, the record company, where the phone lines were buzzing with panicked executives. It wasn't quite the pre-publicity quote they were looking for either at Glyndebourne where Alagna and Gheorghiu sing on 27 April. A Glyndebourne spokesman

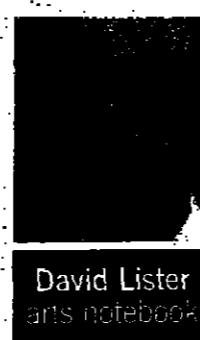
distanced himself with commendable rapidity. "It's not our event, EMI has hired Glyndebourne for a gala." At EMI, a spokeswoman confessed: "The interview was not quite what we expected." Perhaps it's most charitable to see Alagna's remarks as a plea for open access and egalitarianism. A man who maintains

that New York streetwalkers can be found in the Met is an egalitarian at heart. West End producer Thelma Holt was not just in New York to toast the Broadway success of her production of *The Doll's House* this week. I gather that between performances she scoured the

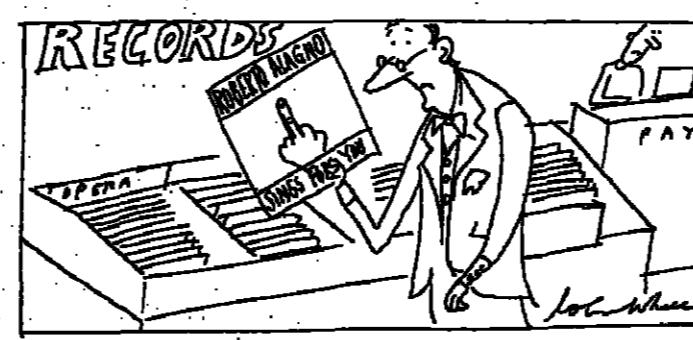
broadway theatres for ex-pats on stage, cornered them in their dressing-rooms and brought back their postal votes for the election. Janet McTeer and Owen Teale in her own production were made to sign. Then she walked along Broadway to collar Antony Sher and Deborah Finlay appearing in *Stanley*. Did

she ensure she got a representative sample of the acting public? "Not bloody likely," Miss Holt replies, "you don't think I'd be traipsing up and down Broadway for the Tories do you?"

The first person I bumped into in my hotel on a visit to Karachi turned out to be veteran horror film actor Christopher Lee. It was a slightly surreal experience because Lee was accompanied by an army officer minder with a machine-gun and also because the tall, distinguished grey-haired actor looked uncommonly like the chap on the banknotes, Pakistan's founder Jinnah. Things rapidly got more surreal. The Pakistani press tried to whip up hysteria against an English actor playing the nation's hero, putting a picture of Lee playing Dracula



David Lister  
ants notebook



on the front page of the biggest English language daily. If this was mischievous, the next day's coverage was downright scurrilous, with a front-page headline asking "Is Jinnah film the new *Satanic Verses*?" It then emerges that the former editor of the paper, who has been writing these pieces, actually went for a part on the film and failed the audition. I took myself off to look at the restoration work being done on the Mohatta Palace, former residence of Jinnah's sister and discovered hidden in the grounds an old and decaying Cadillac. This wreck, it turns out, was the founder of the country's private car. Perhaps Sotheby's should restore it and auction it off. Or, better still, do it up and give it as a present to Christopher Lee.

# arts & books

## Fromage frais

**COMEDY** The Cheese Shop  
*Hen and Chickens, London*

It's ironic that the surreal comedy of Monty Python, designed to leave comedy conventions as soft as Dali's watches, became a constrictive blueprint for hundreds of comedians. Generations of misguided undergraduate males who had the ability to run around and adopt high-pitched "female" voices believed that they could do comedy without resorting to being funny.

Thankfully, sketch comedy was deader than Python's parrot until last year's Edinburgh Fringe Festival. This saw the flowering of a huge bunch of amusing sketch teams that could silly-walk their way across a stage with ease, including Perrier Award-nominees Armstrong and Miller, The League of Gentlemen and The Cheese Shop.

It's a measure of the rivalry of these exciting groups, all jostling for a chance to wear women's clothing on their own television show, that The League of Gentlemen did the ungentlemanly thing of being in the audience checking out the wares of The Cheese Shop, who already have a Radio 4 series under their belts.

This series broadcast in January, contained some great moments but was patchy and suffered from a live student audience who had clearly been blowing their grants the bar well in advance of the recording.

Live, the writing glistens with inspired collisions of ideas and, occasionally, even manages to struggle free of the Python straitjacket. But, it is the performance that lifts The Cheese Shop above their contemporaries. The opening gangster sketch, the lightbulb factory soap opera, the bizarre but hilarious laughing piano sketch and their brilliant employment of running gags, all underline their skill. Their timing rarely goes awry and their talent to play to the audience is highlighted by their ability to elicit laughs with just a sidelong glance.

They only succumb to the deadly lure of the completely unfunny once, in an ill-conceived sketch about a Royal Tournament competition involving dismantling and then re-assembling a jigsaw of a cannon. As flimsy and badly constructed as the jigsaw, it was composed entirely of the team running around, climbing over furniture and shouting a lot. In short, it was slapstick that needs a good slap.

Sketch groups, like boy bands, require the individuals to possess distinct specialisms to assemble a strong team. Get lucky and you have the comedy equivalent of Take That; get it wrong and you've got comedy Boyzone: six indistinguishable blokes and an evening pondering the ceiling to look forward to.

Fortunately, The Cheese Shop fall into the former category, with a cheeky chappie, an accent expert, a gifted musician, a gurker, a victim and an all-round.

If, at an hour and 20 minutes, the set is too long by half an hour, it's only to be expected in a show composed of new material, but it's a confident stride forward from the Radio 4 debut and later outings should see the act being trimmed to a more audience-friendly length.

8-13 Apr and 22-27 Apr (0171-704 2001)

Anthony Thornton



Dig the Nigel Kennedy Experience: Kennedy in rehearsal this week

## A world well lost

**THEATRE** *Antony and Cleopatra*  
*Bridewell Theatre, off Fleet Street, London*

The Bridewell Theatre, just a stone's throw from Fleet Street, used to be a Victorian bath-house and still retains many aspects of its former identity. Added to these at the moment is the sunken blue pool that is a central feature of Carol Metcalfe's new production of *Antony and Cleopatra*. This isn't always an unloved asset but there are times when it genuinely earns its keep. "Here is my space," proclaims the hero in Scene 1, rejecting the summons back to Rome (and to duty) by obstinately stepping into this watery Egyptian amenity in his kafza. The magniloquence of his speech and the somewhat schoolboy defiance of the gesture create a nicely mixed effect.

The pool comes in even handier for emphasising Antony's almost farcically botched suicide. Fooled by the false report that Cleopatra has killed herself, Jonathan Oliver's Antony falls not just onto his sword but also into the water, which is then bathed in red light and which, for a protracted few seconds, appears to have become his grave. But the elegiac mood is rudely broken when he is forced to re-surface, his attempt at a noble death collapsing suddenly indignantly like some failed stunt. Only by the glorious self-transcendence of Cleopatra's own eventual suicide can restitution be made for this bungling.

Oliver is much the best actor in this staging, which Metcalfe has set in 1942. Neither he nor his Cleopatra (Alphonsina Emmanuel) are in the first or even second flush of youth but – for a play that focuses, with more than a touch of satire, on middle-aged love – you need actors who look like veterans of venvy and quite a bit more battered by time and experience than this pair. There's not enough abandonment or embarrassing extravagance here in their expressions of love. We are treated to one arousing moment when Oliver worshippingly adjusts the tie, belt and trousers of the male khaki uniform his lover has donned, but for the most part you miss the sense of exhibitionistic amorous display. Beautiful, long-limbed and capable at times of ringing eloquent verse delivery, Ms Emmanuel is a striking Cleopatra, but not a fascinating, witty or tantalising one.

Metcalfe intriguingly ends the first half with a spotlight on the isolated, pensively unhappy figure of Ruth Bennett's Octavia – a stage-picture that accentuates her role as pawn in the power game between her husband Antony and her brother Octavius Caesar, who, in Angus Hubbard's performance, comes over as an unusually repellent, cold, priggish school prefect. A wider sense of the unloved self-interest and public decadence that fill the world of this play – where war is the continuation by other means of personal vendettas and where the political survival of the military top brass is a higher priority than defeating the enemy – can't be fully transmitted in a scaled-down production with a cast of only eight.

The design doesn't help. The three triangular movable platforms of Bridget Kimak's set trap the action in too confined a space (a bit like staging *Aida* on an Olympic medalist's rostrum), giving this most restless of plays a curiously static feel. A decent but disappointing evening. To 3 May. Box-office: 0171-936 3456

Paul Taylor

## Nice one, Nige

After five years away, Nigel Kennedy is back, fusing Bartok with Hendrix. He's clearly lost none of his irreverence, but is he still a mean fiddler?

**CLASSICAL MUSIC** Bach, Bartok and Hendrix Royal Festival Hall, London

Germany saw it first, then Cheltenham last weekend and, on Thursday night, it was London's turn to savour the latest Nigel Kennedy phenomenon: a *Hendrix Concerto in Suite Form*. "Structures, not strictures" announced the promotional flyer and, true to form, this was no ordinary "classical gig". Purple "spots" softened the stage and the allsorts audience set up a crescendo of chatter before lights dimmed and a God-Save-the-Queen tune-up signalled Kennedy's imminent entrance. You should have heard the applause: it was tumultuous. And while the rest of the band sat among the shadows, Kennedy took centre-stage and launched straight into the opening "Tempo di Ciaccona" from Bartok's sinewy unaccompanied Violin Sonata, passionately, emphatically (he'd stamp the boards at virtually every bar) and with plenty of tenderness for contrast. The "Fuga" that followed was equally vehement, though again, there was sensitivity to spare. This was the Kennedy of old, shy but unstinting, personable yet wholly consumed by the score at hand.

Bartok's fugue is traditionally followed by a soulful "Melodia" and, having been primed for

"structures not strictures" (my italics), that was what I expected. But, no, Kennedy's scheme was to fracture Bartok's structure at the centre and use some of his *Hendrix Concerto* as filling. Or perhaps the idea was to offer a little light relief, this not being your regular chamber-music audience – and let's face it, Bartok's solo Sonata is a pretty tough nut to crack. So, Kennedy stood back, blending among a string quartet, double-bass and guitar, and swung into "3rd Stone from the Sun", a sort of free-wheeling ramble on *Deep River*. Smiles of recognition registered all around: everyone knew the Hendrix original. Not me, though – I could only treat the score as "variations on a theme".

Kennedy's solo work was mostly agile and loose-wristed and the "Little Wing" that followed summoned much hectic trilling and chirruping, vaguely familiar though hardly a visceral match for Hendrix's raucously disruptive soundworld. I'll assume that the mobile phone that rang from somewhere in the stalls wasn't a protest "from the other side". The switch from Hendrix back to Bartok was both bizarre and ineffectual: I felt as if I'd returned to my CD player after having spent a spell in the

kitchen with the tranny on. Again, Kennedy played beautifully and the audience was intensely attentive. Of course, they could have swallowed the work whole, just as, beyond the interval, they sat spellbound by a forthright, stylistically romantic and technically assured account of Bach's "Chaconne". More Hendrix dominated the second half, time-wise at least, with a purple light-beam posed for "Purple Haze". As Kennedy turned on the heat, a nearby party of senior citizens shuffled shyly to the nearest exit – which was a shame, because, had they stayed, they could have enjoyed an impromptu appearance by the one-time pop star Donovan, poised in lieu of an encore and as harmlessly off-the-wall as Kennedy's *Hendrix Concerto*. My own preference would have been for the ferocious rhythms of Bartok's Fourth String Quartet or the teeth-baring Devil in Stravinsky's *Soldier's Tale*. Hendrix remembered smacks too much of nostalgic cross-over; but then, who could deny that Nigel Kennedy, like the rest of us, is finally getting old?

Robert Cowan

Laurie Lewis

**NEXT WEEK IN THE INDEPENDENT**

**What are you doing on May 1?**

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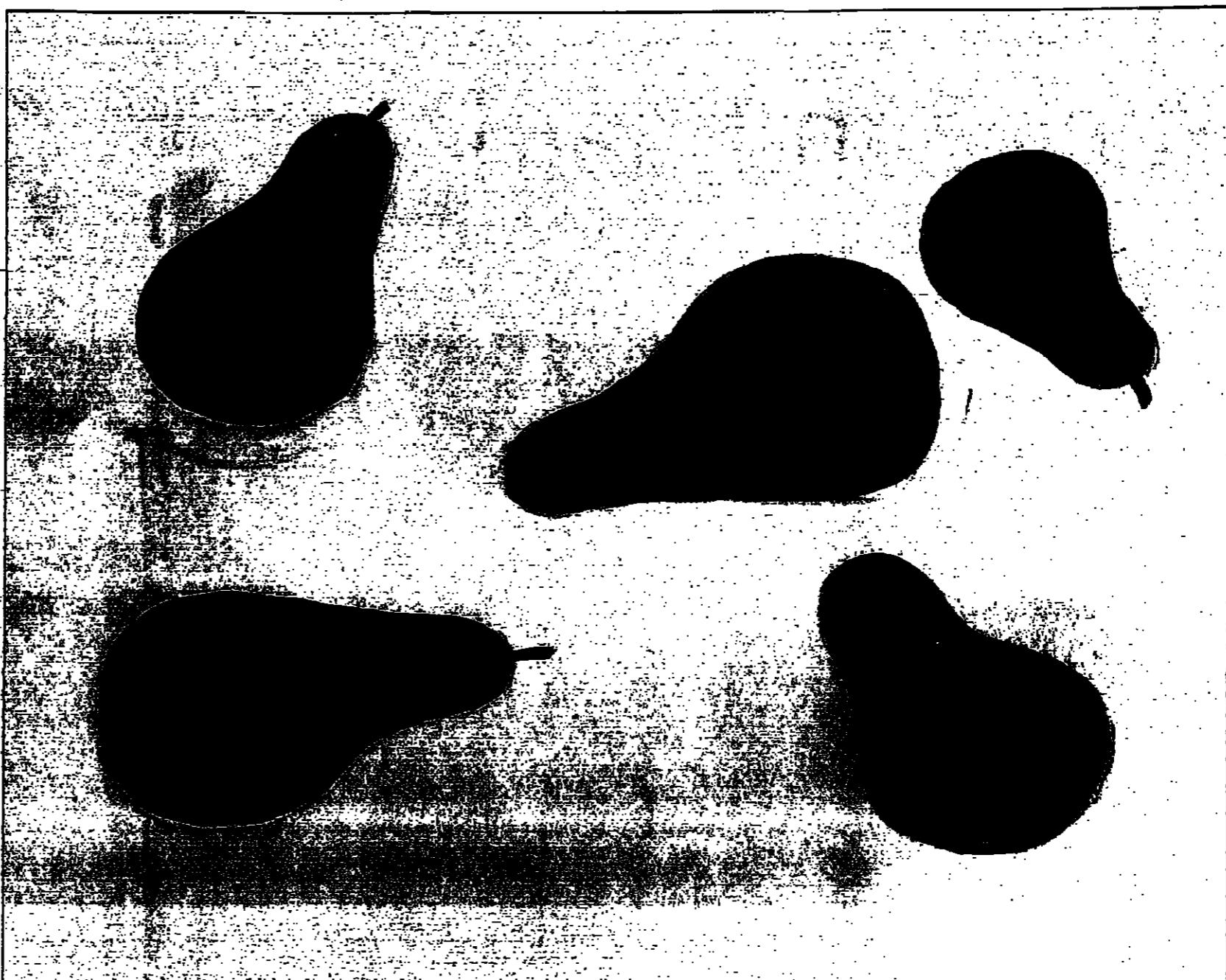
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| Overview | critical view | on view | our view | KEY | THE OPERA  | THE PLAY  | THE FILM  |
|----------|---------------|---------|----------|-----|--|---|---|
|          |               |         |          |     | The Damnation of Faust   | Marlene   | The People vs Larry Flynt   |
|          |               |         |          |     | Producer David Alden and conductor Mark Elder, twin talents of ENO's glory days, return with Berlioz's opera which never intended for the stage. Bonaventure Bottone plays Faust, Willard White is Mephistopheles and Louise Winter is Marguerite in a typically bold production designed by Roni Toren.   | Pam Gems attempts to do what she did for Piaf, Queen Christina and Stanley Spencer with a Dietrich bio-play. Sian Phillips dons the wig and a copy of the trademark Jean-Louis gown to star as the legendary actress, singer and star. Sean Mathias directs Lou Gish and Billy Mathias, his mother, in supporting roles.  | Former Oscar-winner Milos Forman directs Woody Harrelson as Larry Flynt, America's famous pornographer and publisher of <i>Hustler</i> , who fought a landmark legal case over the First Amendment guaranteeing free speech. From the scriptwriters of <i>Ed Wood</i> , also starring Courtney Love and hot new talent Edward Norton.   |
|          |               |         |          |     | Edward Seckerson had no doubts. "Weird and wonderful Berlioz finds a kindred theatricality in the weird and wonderful Alden... [of Elder] Phrases lengthen, pianissimi intensify, and when the big bangs come... you feel as well as hear them." What the whole caboodle was supposed to add up to I cannot begin to suggest. The best thing about the evening was the actual sound," frowned <i>The Times</i> . "Alden was back at his old tricks again, returning to the <i>erant terrible</i> form that so tormented us poor London opera fans in the 1980s," stuttered <i>The Telegraph</i> . "The charisma and singing of Willard White... Alden is satirising modern production styles... but sometimes the underlining is too heavy," equivocated <i>The Standard</i> . "Betrays Berlioz," denounced <i>The Spectator</i> . | Paul Taylor nodded at this "sketchy, predictable, lazily assembled, and, to be honest, really rather enjoyable show... the Taj Mahal bathed in moonlight is scarcely less majestic a monument than Phillippe's cheekbone-flaunting Dietrich." "Calculated, skilful magic, going straight for the emotional jugular with a heady mixture of myth, nostalgia and style," glowed <i>The Mail</i> . "Her fans will not be disappointed; nor Dietrich fans either," admitted <i>The Standard</i> . "For all Phillippe's excellence... somewhere inside Gems is a <i>Hello!</i> reader, embarrassingly in awe of celebrity," diagnosed <i>The Times</i> . "Phillips transforms a dodgy script into a personal triumph," agreed <i>The Telegraph</i> . "Sean Mathias's production ends up looking uncomfortably like a two-hour turn from <i>Stars in Their Eyes</i> ," asserted <i>The Standard</i> . | Ryan Gilbey smelt a rat. "Any illusions about this being a political work are quickly dispelled by the film's eagerness to portray everyone but Larry and his clan as sub-human." "This screed of scatological Americana... Would Columbia Pictures be prepared to take on a movie defending the author of <i>Mein Kampf</i> on similar grounds? You wouldn't have to be Jewish to object," thundered <i>The Standard</i> . "Harrelson puts on a great show as the pom merchant who rightly labels himself a scumbag, yet still earns our admiration for his honesty and fighting spirit," welcomed <i>The Times</i> . "The exploitative misogyny of Flynt's output is never examined... profoundly problematic entertainment," worried <i>Time Out</i> . "Good causes make shaky and sanctimonious movies," aphorised the <i>F</i> . |
|          |               |         |          |     | At ENO, the Coliseum, London WC2 (0171-632 8300) 16, 19, 23, 30 April, 2 May at 8pm and 26 April at 6.30pm.  | At the Lyric, Shaftesbury Ave, London W1 (0171-494 5045) until 21 Jun.  | Cert 18, 130 mins, on general release.  |
|          |               |         |          |     | Arch-purists will shudder at this production of a barely stagable work but Elder reminds you of what this orchestra can do and Alden, as ever, encourages performances of passionate commitment. Not his greatest production, but undeniably theatrical.   | In dramatic and biographical terms, a woefully missed opportunity but the final half-hour – a concert – is uncannily good and, with Phillips singing "Where Have All the Flowers Gone?", ultimately moving.   | Fiercely attacked in the USA for glossing over Flynt's rampant misogyny, it received good reviews and won Oscar nominations but bombed badly at the box-office. Courtney Love, however, conquers all.   |

Pared down: 'Orchard of Pears', No 15, 1977, oil on canvas.  
Estate of the artist  
(right): a portrait of William Scott by Alfred Jones (below)



William Scott, currently the subject of a retrospective show at the Bernard Jacobson Gallery, was one of the leading abstract painters of his generation. He played a major role in bringing British painting back into the mainstream after the isolation of the Second World War and was the first British painter to make contact with Pollock, Rothko and Kline in New York in the 1950s. Much of his painting was done in his studio in Somerset, where he taught at the Bath Academy of Art from 1946 to 1956. He liked to think of himself as belonging to a "west country school" that included the abstract painters of St Ives. Here, Scott's oldest surviving friend, Alfred Jones, one of the group of artists, musicians and writers (including Dylan Thomas) who grew up together in Swansea in the pre-War years, recalls their friendship, formed while they were students at the Royal Academy. Below, Richard Ingleby reviews the exhibition

## William Scott: a life study

**A**bout 10 years ago William Scott telephoned me to say that the BBC were about to show a film of his early life in Enniskillen made by his son James. I found it intensely moving. The landscape in which he lived, the tragic death of his father (he had fallen fatally attempting to rescue the victim of a fire) and the influence of his first very enlightened teacher all seemed to have contributed to the Scott I knew.

The film ended where and when we first met – our arrival at the Royal Academy Schools in September 1931. He came with his close friend William Tocher, a fellow student at Belfast. I came from Swansea. Three provincials in a new world, we became friends immediately.

Tocher and Scott (surnames were almost invariably used) were then in the Sculpture School and I was in Painting but we met in the famous semi-circular drawing studio.

I was concerned then to draw as faithfully as possible what I saw, but Scott seemed to be after something else. I can only describe it (and I remember clearly the first life drawing of him that I saw) as a kind of essence, stripped entirely of inessential detail and, by virtue of its strangely esoteric quality, difficult to put into words.

It was a characteristic that I think clearly marked his work throughout; all his drawings, the early delightful "other world" still lives of fish, eggs and utensils, his progress towards abstraction and the final large paintings where austerity, essence, geometry and evocation come together. I know of no instance where the work of an artist seems to reflect more his personality.

We were lucky. Our principal drawing lecturer at the Royal Academy was Tom Honnington, an artist of great stature possessing all the patience and skill that are the necessary gifts of a great teacher.

**W**illiam Scott began his artistic training as a sculptor but, in 1934, after three years at the Royal Academy schools in London, he switched to painting with the now famous grumble that he couldn't stack sculptures under his bed. Not, as it turned out, that he ever had to hide his paintings away: in a career that spanned some 50 years, his work was exhibited widely and regularly in the US and Germany as well as here, from his first one-man show in 1942 right up until his death in 1989.

A mini retrospective of 18 paintings from 1946 to 1983 at the Bernard Jacobson Gallery in London shows something of the consistency of Scott's talents over the years and his life-long devotion to the still life as subject. The work moves through several recognisable phases from the carefully constructed figurative pictures of the late 1940s; into various degrees of object-based abstraction; to an even simpler sort of still life painting in the 1970s and early 1980s.

The earliest period (the worst served by the current exhibition) was one of the best. "I find beauty in plainness," he said in 1947, "in a conception that is precise"; a precision that led to pictures like

We were surrounded by rare beings. In the "out of the way" rooms, Peter Scott was even then constructing models of birds and Mervyn Peake could transform a perfectly normal model in the life class into a character from *Gormenghast*.

Outside it was bleaker. It was 1931; soon after the great depression, money was scarce. That we were all skin goes without saying.

After a year or so of digs we began to stretch our wings. William and I moved to an apartment in a house in St John's Wood with Scott, Mervyn, a gentle giant from Canada, and Laurence Broadhouse (who later became a BBC designer). Broadhouse in a memoir recalls when Scott, having come by bus from St John's Wood, carried an iron saucepan of stew down Bond St to be heated up in the college Common room, a gift from our landlady, a sign of the times.

Shortly afterwards, William and I moved, with Bernard Hailstone (who became a noted portrait painter and President of that society) into an unfurnished flat in Redcliffe Road. It was some time before we collected some furniture and quite a while before we were to be seen carrying mattresses, picked up at knock-down sales, one after the other, down Fulham Road.

It was certainly one of the most enjoyable and exciting periods of my life. There was little social activity at the Academy – there were just not the facilities – we simply spent our working day there and went back to Chelsea.

Fortunately, we had many links with the Royal College of Art – several fellow students from Swansea and Belfast were there and gradually our leisure mingled with theirs. The Friday night "hops" there were the high spot of the week and only the most serious interruption would keep us away. It was also an intensely formative time, one of

endless discussion.

We were all immensely stimulated by the great artists of the period, from Picasso to Klee, from Gabo to Epstein.

By a stroke of luck, a fellow student at the Royal Academy, apparently quite well to do, had taken the flat above us, and soon preferred our unfurnished but happy shambles to his well-appointed studio.

He joined us and brought with him a few luxuries, above all a collection of records that added enormously to our enjoyment: Schubert playing Beethoven piano concertos; Mozart Symphonies; that wonderful Bach double violin concerto and perhaps for us, even more revelatory, a broad introduction to the later composers Ravel, Debussy, Scriabin, Prokofiev and Stravinsky.

About that time two incidents occurred that I shall never forget. Our friend Tocher had heard that it was possible to hire a boat at Richmond or Putney (or somewhere nearby) and, with the aid of the strong tidal current, row to Limehouse – then catch the returning tide for the journey back.

Tocher, William and I with one other (I forgot whom) decided to make the trip. We made fair time to a point not far from Tower Bridge, swept along at a cracking pace.

Unfortunately, at one point we were confronted by a series of barges moored side by side.

We could not change direction quickly enough and were swept against them. The only solution was to push ourselves along to the outermost boat but we could only do this by standing and pushing above our heads. But the more we pushed the more we rocked and it was only after what seemed an interminable struggle that we reached the last barge – exhausted by a combination of effort, panic and hysterical laughter.

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Needless to say our timing was of something of a factotum – preparing our evening meals of vegetable stews etc and wondering what on earth to do next. One was now highly trained, but not to earn one's living. I returned to Swansea for a summer break and then took a flat in Redcliffe St in Chelsea where I was joined by Dylan Thomas whom I had met with my then "old" friend Daniel Jones, the composer.

Scott lived nearby and we all spent much time together. He and Dylan were soon firm friends. In later years, I realised how much that friendship had meant to him, but I did not realise, until Scott's memorial service at St James' Church when his son James and Robert read two of his poems, that Scott had written poetry himself.

The new flat was daunting. Once

more, just bare boards and a few boxes, but help was at hand. Pamela Hansford Johnson (later to become engaged to Dylan) and her mother had furniture in store, some of which they kindly lent us. We had written poetry there.

This seemed feasible if somewhat nefarious and half a dozen of us, including William, decided to test the theory by attending the Chelsea Arts Ball by this means – having no other.

It was a case where experiment and practice on the spot were ill-advised so rehearsals were carried out on less distinguished doors. They indicated a reasonable chance of success and so it proved.

I was the tallest of the team, Scott was the shortest. We took up appropriate positions with the other four ranged in between and, to our joy, persuaded the heavy door to give way. We pealed up the staircase and immediately mingled with the crowd. It was a glorious night but I have a strong feeling that, for all of us, the climax was really at the beginning rather than at the end.

Towards the end of that period, I left the team.

Scott always saw his own work as wedded to a European, particularly French, tradition. His interest in still life, he once said, stemmed from "a desire to look at Cezanne through the eyes of Chardin", but his US experiences gave him the confidence to paint bigger; often with striking results (witness *White and Orange*, 1960 and the later *New Still Life Study*, 1983, both in the current show). To my eye, however, the three strongest pictures are also the smallest. *Figure into Landscape*, one of the best works in the Jacobson show, a transformation from one to the other. 1953, the year that Scott painted *Figure into Landscape*, was also the year that he visited the US and encountered Abstract Expressionism at first hand. He was one of the first British painters to grasp what it was all about and, rarer still for an English painter in the 1950s, be found an audience there for his own work, especially

minimal nature than before, which in time led to a softer, simplified return to the still life theme. These pictures are often more complex than they first seem, marked by subtle differentiations of colour and tone, but all but the best of them lack the precision that gave his earlier work its edge. He also, occasionally, turned to the figure, remembering his wife Mary as his model in the 1940s. One such

foreshadowing the war. On one occasion, Mervyn, William and another close friend, the painter Will Evans – who had also studied at the Royal Academy – and I had a most unpleasant first-hand experience.

We were returning at night by tube from the West End to Earl's Court when a group of black-shirted youths began to taunt Mervyn, who enjoyed dressing in somewhat bizarre fashion (trousers slashed to the knee and one half of his face clean shaven, the other half bearded).

At the entrance to the tube station they met with a group of some 30 or 40 others – obviously on their way to a rally. They immediately surrounded us, jostling and threatening.

Fortunately, our propensity for "endless discussion" already referred to came to our aid; it took what seemed an age to convince them that we were not "Trotsky's best friends"!

Mollified, eventually they went their way. That kind of confrontation was sadly all-too frequent at the time.

At the next move – to Coleherne Road – we joined up with Scott once more. It was 1934. Scott continued at the Royal Academy Schools and I think it must have been about that time that he decided to switch from sculpture to the painting school.

A fortunate choice, I believe, because he was to make to British painting a uniquely personal contribution, unique for the quality of his vision and, perhaps above all, for its absolute honesty.

Once again, I returned to Swansea for the summer months, but remained there until the war. Dylan lived half in Swansea and half in London.

It was from Dylan that I had news of Scott. We met once more in Cornwall in 1936 where he married Mary Lucas, a fellow sculpture student. Subsequently, they lived in Italy and France and it was not until after the war that we resumed contact. His career from that time is well documented.

**Robert Hanks on mortality, and Jasper Rees on recycling, page 31**

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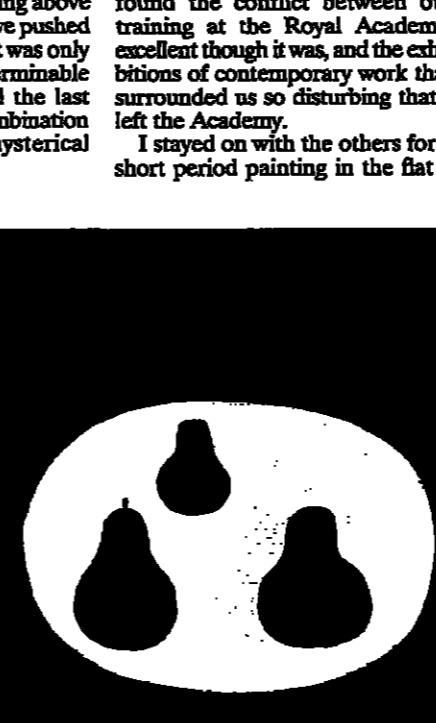
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Estate of the artist

painting, *Reclining Nude Orange Pillow*, 1980-82, is the unhappy note on which the Jacobson exhibition ends. It is a terrible picture that mars an otherwise excellent selection.

The Bernard Jacobson Gallery,

1a Clifford Street, London W1

(0171-495 8575). To 26 Apr.

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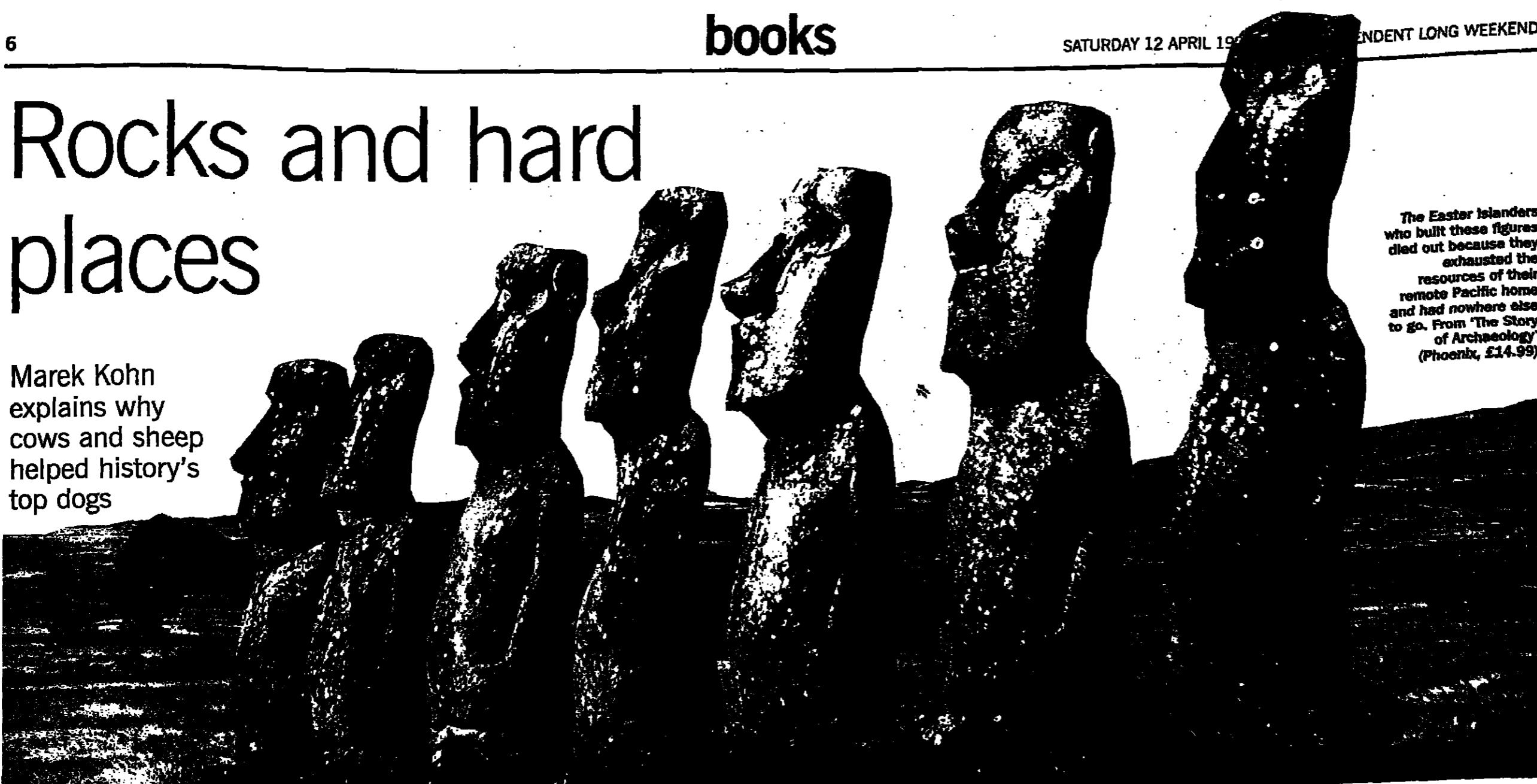
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# Rocks and hard places

Marek Kohn  
explains why  
cows and sheep  
helped history's  
top dogs



The Easter Islanders who built these figures died out because they exhausted the resources of their remote Pacific home and had nowhere else to go. From 'The Story of Archaeology' (Phoenix, £14.99)

To protest against the bicentennial celebrations in 1988, an Australian Aborigine staged a mock-invasion of an English beach for the benefit of the cameras. His point was that we wouldn't think there was anything to celebrate if the First Fleet had sailed in the opposite direction, and the Australians had subjugated us.

The absurdity of the idea lets the steam out of its rhetorical point. Britain was a literate, ocean-going, industrialising state; the original Australians lived by hunting and gathering, using stone tools. Until recent times, whites considered that the explanation for the difference was straightforward. Whites were racially superior to black races, and that was that.

Now, the idea of racial superiority is in a similar position to smoking. Large numbers of people still adhere to it, but their ability to indulge in public is

*Guns, Germs and Steel: a short history of everybody for the last 13,000 years by Jared Diamond, Cape, £18.99*

restricted. Because it is absent from polite society, it can have an effect without facing critical scrutiny. It jostles below the surface, alongside a vague feeling that human societies are complex things which must be shaped by more than a single influence. Even vaguer, however, is our grasp of what those influences might be.

Jared Diamond aims to provide a popular account of these influences, and how they have played out in all corners of the world. He brings good news. First, race doesn't matter. If alien scientists had transferred the prehistoric Australians to Britain, and vice versa, the former would have taken up farming, forged metal tools and perhaps sent fleets to force the Antipodeans out of the Stone Age. Like

Europeans around the world, they would have achieved this mainly by bringing in germs to which local populations had no immunity, as well as guns and blades.

Second, the choice is not between claims based on race alone, and counter-arguments that depend on multiple factors so elusive that one can only gesture in their direction. There are, Diamond asserts, just four major influences over the fortunes of peoples. These are the availability of plant and animal species suitable for domestication; the orientation of land masses; their connections with each other, and their area or population size.

Eurasia came out on top on all counts. It gave its human inhabitants species such as sheep, rather than kangaroos. It lies east to west, with fewer climatic barriers to the movement of exploitable species than in north-south continents such as Africa. Eurasia was isolated from the

Americas and Australia, restricting the diffusion of its livestock or technology. And its size encouraged innovation, with more societies in competition.

The basic simplicity of Diamond's model makes *Guns, Germs and Steel* a pleasure to read. As one ranges across the continents, ways of life, crops, alphabets and political forms, the blank areas in the atlas of humankind seem to fill up with landmarks and terrain. The book serves as a sketch of how he would like historical study to develop, as science rather than one damn fact after another.

There are, however, some questions for biological science to clarify if that project is to proceed. According to Diamond, the "Fertile Crescent" of Eurasia was a zone in which the ecology and geography were just right to encourage the start of farming. But according to a recent paper from the fringe of race science, the secret of the

Crescent's success was its central location among human populations, which caused genes for intelligence to collect in it. Conversely, those genes remained sparse in peripheral areas such as Australia. That the Crescent was fertile and Australia barren was taken to be mere coincidence.

Diamond's model is far more persuasive, but he has more in common with the racial view than the bulk of his book suggests. He does not address current scientific-racist arguments directly, skipping over IQ tests in a paragraph. Yet one casual claim affirms a fundamental tenet of the scientific-racist paradigm – that some peoples are naturally smarter than others. "Natural selection promoting genes for intelligence has probably been far more ruthless in New Guinea than in more densely populated, politically complex societies," he suggests, concluding that "in mental ability, New Guineans

are probably superior to Westerners". The veteran big hitters of scientific anti-racism, such as Stephen Jay Gould, would probably sooner eat a copy of *The Bell Curve* than make a statement like that. Perhaps *Guns, Germs and Steel* represents a new tendency, in which liberals stress environmental factors while trying to redistribute claims of genetic superiority from dominant to marginal peoples. The first part of this strategy is vital, and Diamond has performed a valuable service in giving shape to the play of environmental forces. The second could boost the resurgence of race science by taking liberal opinion from its traditional position, which denies that genes influence intelligence, straight to the opposite camp, where racial inequality is seen as a fact of nature. If scientists believe there is a middle ground between these two positions, now is the time for them to speak up.

# Life, the universe and everything

George Walden wrestles with the Big Ideas in a sprawling Dutch landscape

*The Discovery of Heaven* by Harry Mulisch, translated by Paul Vincent, Viking, £17

In an Italian religious painting, unity between the upper and lower levels is often assured by abstracting the earthly (for example, through idealised figures) and humanising the sublime (as in those smirking putti). So heaven and earth are made to intermingle in an aesthetic whole. Relating the natural to the supernatural, the top to the bottom of the canvas, is more challenging in literature, where there are fewer ready-made conventions. This is the task that the Dutch writer Harry Mulisch squares up to unflinchingly in his new novel, *The Discovery of Heaven*.

We begin in the top half, with a prologue introducing us to the deities who contrive the book's plot. Their status is ambivalent. Only loosely in touch with "The Chief", they are Olympian figures with human characteristics: a sort of board of management through whose malignity, indifference or incompetence the world's affairs have got out of hand. Ever since the scientific revolution, personified here by Francis Bacon, things have been going to the bad. In a last, nihilistic throw the Olympian powers send an agent whose mission it is to cast humanity loose. The management's attitude to life on earth is literally "to hell with it". We have no God and an overweening science – the echoes of Nietzsche and Faust are clear enough though the Olympians now chat about the Double Helix and DNA.

Getting to the birth and activation of the agent takes up the first, most satisfactory part of the book. As the plot is a contrivance of the Gods, so too are the characters, who symbolise every aspect of human nature. Max Delius and Onno Quist are friends. Max is an astronomer, Onno a philologist. Yet each also embodies his opposite. Max is a womanising hedonist as well as a disciplined scientist. Onno the offspring of a well-heeled family who despises money. "Like two mirrors reflecting one another", their complementarity is secured by the discovery that they were conceived on the same day. Max's parents are presented in similar contrapuntal fashion. His Jewish mother was deported to Auschwitz, his German-speaking father executed for collaboration in occupied Holland.

Given this Yin and Yang characterisation, it is a miracle that Mulisch tells us a story we want to read; but to begin with, he does. Max falls for Ada, a cellist, who leaves him for Onno, who loses her back to Max for a single act of water-borne coition. Its product is Quentin, the infant prodigy and unsuspecting agent of the celestial mis-managers. (Given that Ada makes haste to sleep with Onno, we cannot be too sure about this.)

The conception of Quentin takes place, symbolically, in Cuba in 1968. Yet the account of Max, Onno and Ada's stay in this paradise

that was to fail is as flat and dated as Onno's later experiences as a Dutch politician. The matter-of-fact language and lack of imaginative power contrast with the chapter in which Max visits Auschwitz – no novelty, either, but an event to which Mulisch brings genuinely fine writing and true emotional force. "Even in heaven eternal bliss would be possible only by the grace of a criminal loss of memory."

Themes of forgetting recur, sometimes naturally, more often by unsightly artifice. Ada vegetates for five years after a road accident following her return from Cuba and never recovers consciousness. Quentin is born, as befits his mission, by Caesarian section.

His appearance should bring a new ascent in our interest. Instead, it marks the onset of a slow decline. He is a beautiful, unearthly and cerebral child, yet feeble, precious children can be horribly tiresome. As slow to speak as Einstein (his first word is "obelisk"), he is given to uncanny insights, one of which inspires in Max a new theory of space and time. Space and time then turn against Max, who in an accident (and another break with the book's more naturalistic first half) is struck dead by a meteorite. This is a pity: Max is a sympathetic human agent in a novel whose feet are rapidly leaving the ground, and we miss him.

Quentin dreams of castles, but his mission is irredeemably destructive. In a long adventure sequence straight from Tintin, he steals the tablets of Moses from the Lateran Chapel and takes them to Jerusalem. The stones crumble to nothing, leaving humanity as drift. Quentin returns to his spiritual home.

In the epilogue one of the Gods, deciding to leave things there, quotes Goethe's words: "Restriction shows the master's hand". Mulisch would have done well to apply them to himself. To say this novel is intellectually ambitious is an understatement. Instead of taking on heaven and earth, it should have restricted itself to the lower canvas. Transcendental messages come across more powerfully if they eschew the supernatural.

Here, the problem of unity of tone is not so much unresolved as scarcely tackled. One moment Mulisch is telling a story in plain, old-fashioned oils, the next he is laying on all manner of colours in startling acrylics. He makes claims to omniscience in more than the authorial sense, and there are many diverting ideas and instructive passages. However, much of his knowledge is thrown at us raw, with a surfeit of facts and theories and a deficiency of artistry.

A novel of this scope and length is destined to be greeted either as the millenarian work of Big Ideas we have all been waiting for, or as a pretentious failure. This is unfair, but the risk is inherent in the enterprise. A work purporting to give an all-embracing view of the human condition cannot be only partially successful.



The moment of truth: Mission Control registers the explosion of Challenger (visible on the monitor screen)

PHOTOGRAPH: PLANET EARTH

# From Manhattan to Shangri-La

*Richard Feynman: a life in science by John and Mary Gribbin, Viking, £18*

**R**ichard Feynman (1918-88) was to the second half of the century what Einstein was to the first: the perfect example of scientific genius. He is best known for his solution to the explosion of the space shuttle Challenger in 1986. Feynman discovered that the rubber seals on the solid fuel booster rockets leaked in conditions of extreme cold, thus releasing combustible liquid. Even worse, NASA's engineers had detected this fault but had been gagged by a cynical management, content to play Russian roulette with safety.

Such were the political pressures to find that the Challenger débâcle had been an accident that Feynman had to struggle to get his views into the final report of the commission of enquiry. His appendix concludes that: "For a successful technology, reality must take precedence over public relations, for Nature cannot be fooled."

Feynman's solution was impressive on two counts. He was already seriously ill with cancer when he agreed to serve on the commission, and he was in his 68th year, or some 40

years past what is usually considered a great physicist's sell-by date. His undisputed claim to genius rests not just on the staggering originality he brought to scientific problems, but on his sustained versatility over decades.

Feynman was a leading light on the Manhattan Project that developed the atomic bomb in 1943-45; he won the 1965 Nobel Prize for his work on radiation theory; he pioneered the complex theory of weak nuclear force. He also revolutionised the study of quantum mechanics and worked out a new approach (quantum electrodynamics) that provided a model for the interaction of particles and their movement from one space-time point-instant to another. He developed the theory of superfluidity in liquid helium; he demonstrated that the proton and the neutron were not elementary

particles but were composed of more basic elements known as quarks and, in his fifties, he revolutionised the study of computers by his demonstration of parallel processing.

As a private personality, Feynman was a hedonist who liked to play bongos and frequent nightclubs. He was a lecturer of genius, with a decided taste for the gallery touch. In his later life he became obsessed with the Soviet republic of Tuva in Siberia, which figured in his imagination as an invented Shangri-La; he made it his lifetime's ambition to go there. But those were the days when Reagan had decreed that the Soviet Union was the evil empire. Years dragged by as Feynman's request was processed through the labyrinthine Soviet bureaucracy.

Finally, an official invitation arrived in California from the Soviet Academy of Sciences – four days after his death. Like Moses with the promised land, Feynman never got to Tuva. The project was fulfilled by the Joshua of the piece, Feynman's friend Robert Leighton.

The salient elements in Feynman's life are well known. It cannot be said that the Gribbins add anything to our

knowledge, and in many respects their lacklustre account serves to diminish his stature. They are absurdly prissy about Feynman's notorious womanising which, in their account, becomes "enjoying the company of pretty girls", as if he were a stage-struck sophomore instead of a fairly ruthless man of the world.

Their disastrous decision to alternate chapters on pure science with thumbnail sketches of their hero comes across as the merest amateurism – an impression not diluted by the Janet-and-John flavour of some of the scientific explications. The irony is that their "simple" explanations are not that good; Thomas Powers' biography of Heisenberg unravels the theory of nuclear fission more lucidly.

There is one good anecdote. Feynman hated all forms of pretension and detested the self-satisfied elitism of the IQ cultist group, Mensa. When asked to join Mensa he replied that he was not intelligent enough; apparently, at school his IQ had been assessed at 124. If that piece of evidence is not enough to finish off Hans Eysenck and his IQ buffs, nothing ever will.

# Pseud ascending

James Hall traces the rise and rise of Marcel Duchamp, modern art's poker-faced court jester

Duchamp by Calvin Tomkins, Chatto, £25

The irresistible rise of Marcel Duchamp is a story of almost Forrest Gump proportions. A minor Cubist painter in Paris, Duchamp enjoyed fleeting notoriety in America with a painting called "Nude Descending a Staircase No 2" and, after he had given up painting, with a mass-produced urinal called "Fountain" (1917). Then he seemed to give up art altogether to play chess. He claimed he had run out of ideas. By the 1940s his name was forgotten by all but a small circle of admirers. During the 1960s, however, Duchamp was rediscovered by a new generation of artists and critics, and is now routinely regarded as the most important 20th-century artist.

Tom Hanks is unlikely to be queueing up to star in a biopic. As Calvin Tomkins shows in his first full-scale biography, Duchamp believed in the "beauty of indifference". He had many lovers and two wives, but he seems to have been neutral about relationships. His insouciant charm – and his fascination with chess – were bulwarks against intimacy.

An Italian critic has claimed that Duchamp had an incestuous passion for his sister Suzanne, but Tomkins gives a remarkably clean bill of health to his family relationships. His mother's deafness helped make her "placid and indifferent", but in general the family was mutually supportive. Duchamp's father was a well-to-do provincial notary. Even though four of his six children decided to become artists, he gave them all allowances which he scrupulously deducted from their future inheritance. There were no obvious Oedipal struggles here; Duchamp *père* even came to Paris once a month to settle one son's restaurant bills.

The major turning-point in Marcel's career came with the New York Armory Show of 1913. This was the first big showing of avant-garde French art in America, and his Cubo-Futurist "Nude Descending a Staircase No 2" was the major *succès de scandale*. It is a lugubrious painting in which the movements of a naked figure down a flight of stairs are reduced to diagrammatic form. Nobody quite knows why it caused such a stir in America (in Europe it had been barely noticed) but the madly professorial title is presumably what hit

home. Nudes were meant to be docile and user-friendly, not marauding sex-machines.

When Duchamp went to New York in 1915, he was already a celebrity. Tomkins gives a good account of how he charmed the local media with his wry appreciation of America and ability to deliver urban sound-bites. New York, he said, is itself "a complete work of art"; the only works of art America has created "are her plumbing and her bridges"; the American woman "is the most intelligent woman in the world today – the only one that always knows what she wants". He was the most penetrating and amusing European observer of the New World since Oscar Wilde.

Duchamp's most revolutionary works are his "ready-mades" – manufactured objects chosen seemingly at random and exhibited as art. He had already devised a couple of ready-mades before leaving France ("Bicycle Wheel" and "Bottle-Rack"), but they are now regarded as homages to America. The snow shovel and the urinal were bought from hardware stores in New York and suggest a delight in industrial commodities – and a corresponding disdain for anything hand-made.

Yet Duchamp did not revel in the modern to the exclusion of the old or archetypal. His early machine images never looked as modern as those of his Futurist-inspired contemporaries. His first machine image was a small painting of an old fashioned coffee-mill: the kind of object that Chardin or William Morris might have appreciated. It is a device that satisfies all five senses – touch, sight, sound, smell, and eventually taste. Indeed, in the 1930s he even made a miniature replica of the urinal in terracotta.

This refusal to renounce a primal physical engagement with the world is what makes Duchamp's art so beguiling and enigmatic. In his best work, the sensual always vies with the clinical. This is the ethos behind his outrageous contention that he wanted to grasp things with the mind "the way the penis is grasped by the vagina". He speaks both as a lover and as a scientist.

Tomkins writes for the *New Yorker*, and he has done a very professional job. He has written about Duchamp since they became friends in the 1960s: not only is this book well researched, it is very readable. Readability is a rare commodity in Duchamp studies, so this is no mean feat.

Nonetheless, in his determination not to be included in the "international tribe" of Ducham-



'Nude Descending Staircase No 2' PHILADELPHIA MUSEUM OF ART © 1996 ARS, NEW YORK/ADAGE PARIS

polists, Tomkins can sometimes seem a little superficial. He believes Duchamp has to be approached with a "light heart"; everywhere he sees jocundism and "epic joy", rather than the usual pessimism. His determination to be upbeat leads him to some naive pronouncements. In the 1930s, he observes, the "buoyant optimism" of France "had been undermined by the worldwide Depression and also by the internal hatreds and conflicts that occasionally boil over and disrupt the surface bonheur of French life". *Oh la la!* This is the language of the package-tour guide.

Duchamp's own political views are dispensed with in a single sentence: "The conflicts

between right- and left-wing zealots meant little to Duchamp, whose political attitudes were governed by the same beauty of indifference that he applied to life and art". Duchamp's "indifference" was subsequently criticised by the German artist Joseph Beuys in a televised performance called *The Silence of Marcel Duchamp is Overrated* (1964). When Duchamp celebrates the end of the war by dining in a German restaurant in New York, Tomkins feels no need to comment. It is scarcely credible that Duchamp ate his meal with utter equanimity. If he did, we might have to think about the beast of indifference.

# Melancholy baby

Carole Morin on Daddy's girl

*The Kiss* by Kathryn Harrison, Fourth Estate, £14.99

Women are allowed to take themselves seriously, whereas likeable lads have to stay self-deprecating if they want to be loved. Or so it seems if the *autobiographies of pale English wimples* like Richard Rayner and Nick Hornby are compared to the darker memoirs of such American babes as Elizabeth Wurtzel and Mary Karr. The female writers have more in common with the *watakusishi shosetsu* the Japanese "i-novel" – a distinct form that is neither fiction nor autobiography.

True to gender, novelist Kathryn Harrison's *The Kiss* follows in the melancholic footsteps of Uno Chiyó, rather than the life-affirming skip of nice-boy Nick. Given that her book is about her affair with her preacher father, this is appropriate. Their incestuous relationship begins with a lecherous, wet kiss at an airport and ends when she decides to enrol at a creative-writing school.

Is the story true? In a voyeuristic culture, the notion of truth both attracts and repels the reader. By using a photograph of pubic hair on the cover, the publisher is manipulating this grotesque fascination. Harrison plays a similar game when describing a teenage trip to the gynaecologist to have her hymen broken at her mother's request. The doctor, a father figure, is mildly surprised, but carries out his task with a series of green dildos. "Their green is a green that exists nowhere in nature ... One after another he inserts them."

"You couldn't make it up," is one response to this bizarre scene. Another is that literal truth is irrelevant. The plastic penises are an effective device to prove that Mom is a fleshy baby, and a motivation for the narrator's affair with her father – a vengeful way of sexually humiliating her mother.

The idea that reality should be edited to make a story clearer and more compelling has been controversial since Picasso fell out with Gertrude Stein because she "lied" in the

A Perfect Execution

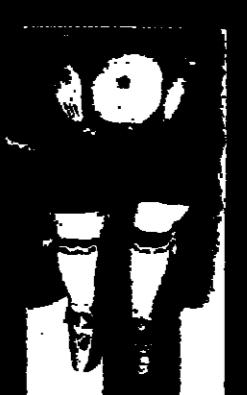
A compelling mixture of murder-mystery, Greek tragedy and love story

SUNDAY TELEGRAPH

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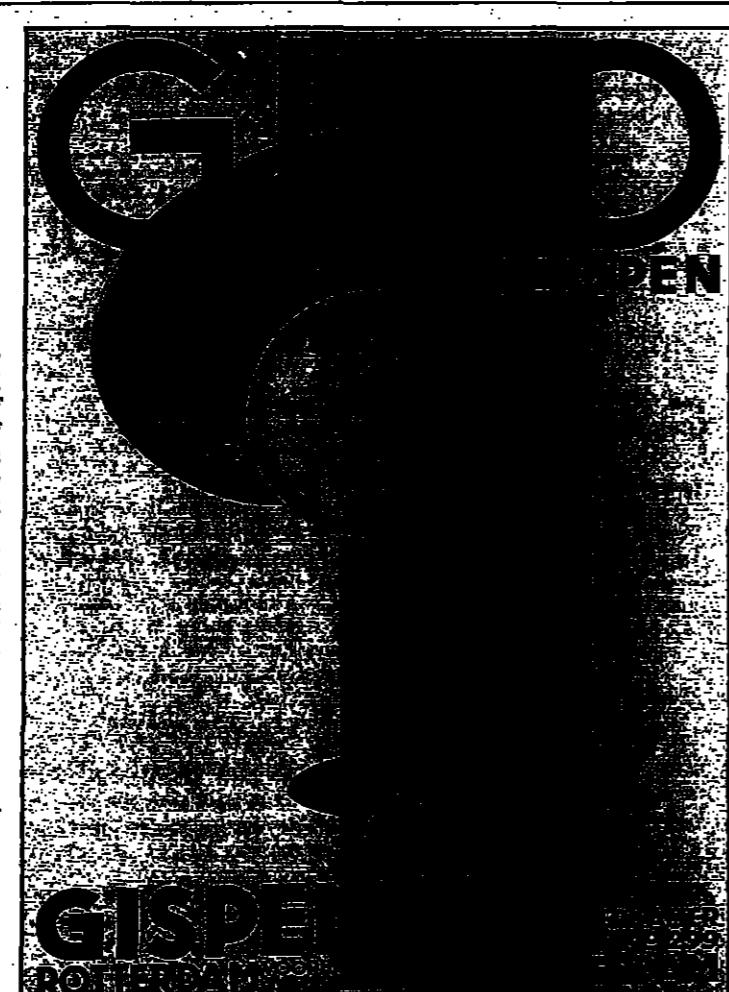
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EVENING STANDARD



PICADOR

## A week in books



From '20th Century Design' by Jonathan Woodham (OUP, £8.99)

new Art, we can compare it head-to-head with Craig Clunas's *Art in China* for OUP. Clunas, I think, wins on nearly every count. Let's take one familiar example: the extraordinary Terracotta Army of life-sized clay soldiers buried with the Qin Emperor at Lintong in 210BC. Tregear waxes vaguely lyrical about the naturalism of figures that may portray "actual members of his bodyguard". But Clunas plants the tomb troops in much firmer historical soil, explaining why the army is "a triumph of bureaucracy as much as of art". The breathless rapture, he assumes, we can supply for ourselves.

Fair enough; but Oxford's editors should spare a thought for the unreconstructed Sister Wendy tendency. Many lay readers may still fancy a spot of uplift. Besides, the entire Oxford project pivots on a paradox – visually pleasurable books that challenge the idea of

innocent visual pleasure. And they do not stand alone: recent Thames & Hudson titles (such as Whitney Chadwick's bestselling *Women, Art and Society*) can match OUP blow for theoretical blow.

Meanwhile, Phaidon plans a vast new library entitled *Art & Ideas*. On the evidence of two outstanding volumes out already (on *Islamic Arts* by Jonathan Bloom and Sheila Blair, and on *Early Christian and Byzantine Art* by John Lowden; £14.99 each), Phaidon's series may prove to be the pick of the crop. It boasts expert but undogmatic texts and a wealth of illustrations even finer than T&H or OUP. All in all, gallery-hopping artspotters have reason to rejoice. Our *fin-de-millennium* "archive culture" is alive and well, and living on a bulging shelf of glossy paperbacks.

Boyd Tonkin

## Filling a need and an awful lot of holes

Geoff Dyer on the slick and the dead

*The Undertaking* by Thomas Lynch, Cape, £9.99

Much of what is interesting in this little book is reducible to the opening sentence of the first essay: "Every year I bury a couple hundred of my townpeople." Thomas Lynch is an undertaker; more specifically an undertaker who is also – as he modestly puts it – an "internationally unknown" poet. Dying, claimed Sylvia Plath, "is an art, like everything else", but for Lynch and his father it's a business – like anything else. The father keeps asking Thomas when he was going to write a book about funerals and this is the task he has undertaken. We all have some idea of what lawyers get up to but most of us have had little chance of satisfying our curiosity about "the dismal trade".

Lynch is not the first to work this particular hustle. In his *Notes of an Anatomist*, specifically the essay on "The Dead as a Living", F. González-Crussi wondered what effect his "death-related occupation" might have had upon his own personality. "Corpse handlers, like pathologists, morticians, or embalmers, are viewed with distrust," he notes. "An honest reply to the question of what one does for a living is bound to break the conviviality." Lynch, though, is nothing if not convivial, and has come up with his own solemn kind of conviviality. His style combines the vaguely archaic – "often-times", "assemblage" – with denim-ish slang: "Listen up", "go piss up a rope". The undertaker's job might oblige him to appear timelessly grave, but that professional gravity exists in a specific world of cocaine problems (his brother's) and teenage suicides committed to a Kurt Cobain soundtrack.

Lynch's take on this world is at once nostalgic and unsentimental. Thus there seems to him, in his lifetime, "an inverse relationship between the size of the TV screen and the space we allow for the dead in our lives and landscapes". At the gas station, meanwhile, you can get "tampons and toothpaste but no one comes out to check your oil, nor can the insomniac behind the

glass wall fix your brakes or change your wiper blades". Like that novelistic opening sentence these sharp observations are worthy of an on-form (it's been a while) Updike.

Lynch is less impressive when gnawing away at ethical issues like abortion, assisted suicide, capital punishment and what-not. The fact that he's in the business gives him an automatic authority, I suppose, but various versions of the same point – taking care of the dead is a way of caring for the living – emphasize that, when it comes to intimations of mortality, vocational training is of only limited value. Especially once the novelty of that tone of reverend jauntiness begins to pall.

Lynch would be a much funnier writer if he served up his puns deadpan instead of highlighting them: "Years back before the cremation market really – I can't help this one – heated up": "embalming got to be, forgive me, *de rigueur* during the Civil War"; "a cemetery/golf-course combo – a Golfatorium – seems, fetched only as far as, you will excuse, a nine iron". That cemetery-golf course riff goes on for pages and becomes less funny the harder he tries to squeeze every last drop of satirical juice out of the idea.

The best joke comes when Lynch observes that "the temptation to drop names, well known in the world of letters and epics, is nearly unavoidable. But I was better raised than that." This is from a silly piece about "my friend the poet Matthew Sweeney" in which Lynch is keen to display his inside-track knowledge of London's eateries (Wagamama is "the ultimate noodle bar", apparently).

For sheer ear-reddening embarrassment, however, you should turn not to the essay in which Lynch and his poet pal Don Paterson go for a curry but to the piece about serendipity and contingency, otherwise known as the one about "my friend and editor, the poet Robin Robertson" (twice!) and "my friend and mentor, the poet Henry Nugent" (three times!). It's a benchmark piece: the first time a writer has undertaken the bold feat of giving his editor head in print.

It's a pretty safe bet that Sister Wendy Beckett will not be asked to write for Oxford's *History of Art* series, developed at a cost of £2m and now launched with titles on the photograph, 20th-century design, art in China, European art from 1700-1830 and art and society in Italy, 1350-1500. With her breathless enthusiasm and gossipy urge to get inside the heads of masters old and new, the toothy Carmelite probably embodies the OUP editors' worst nightmare. Elegantly designed, lavishly illustrated and keenly priced (at £8.99 per volume), their series has a clear intellectual agenda – beyond its commercial aim of knocking Thames & Hudson's rival *World of Art* library off its revolving pedestal at the head of the popular arts books market.

Oxford hopes to bring the so-called New Art History out of the seminar room and into the tote bags of gallery-goers everywhere. So exit the traditional canon, with its procession of great names, its rapist aesthetics rooted in idealist philosophy, and its cosy belief in the virtue of courts, patrons, salesrooms and museums. In its place comes a fiercer orthodoxy, devoted to critical theory and social contexts, suspicious of the artist's genius and the spectator's pleasure, asking tough questions about just who got to paint, purchase and possess the objects of its scrutiny. Evelyn Welch, writing on the Quattrocento, tells you an awful lot about household structure in 15th-century Tuscany but manages only a couple of glancing references to Piero della Francesca. The Roundheads have taken over the museum. These days, they won't smash up the statues – but they might insist on some slightly sarky labels underneath.

In most cases, the benefits of the new puritanism outweigh its rather joyless tinge. Since Thames & Hudson have just re-issued Mary Trehearne's *World of Art* volume on Chi-

## Paperbacks



By Christopher Hirst and Emma Hagestad

**Last Night's Fun** by Ciaran Carson (Pimlico, £10) "I could never understand how rock stars would drink whiskey and Coke; perhaps their appetites had been deprived by electricity." This learned, loquacious collection of bits and bobs is resolutely muscle-powered. Mainly a paean to traditional Irish music, it also includes disquisitions about roll-up fags, obscure brands of whiskey and the Irish breakfast, in particular fried eggs ("Mote is a crisp-edged man. Deidre's over-medium-hard, with a slightly liquid centre"). The book is not entirely successful in its Joycean ambition to mirror a night of music with each chapter named after a tune. But, like a raucous *céilidh*, the result combines nostalgia, sentiment, wild energy and much laughter.

**Acts of Revision** by Martyn Bedford (Black Swan, £5.99) Gregory Lynn has no stake in the adult world. "Orphan, bachelor and only child from the age of four and a half", he hides out in his mum's suburban semi living on fried eggs and Fanta, obsessed by childhood slights and miseries. Unhinged by his mother's death, he decides to seek out his secondary school teachers and give them a much-needed lesson in pain and humiliation. Told in a series of grisly vignettes, the novel describes the appropriate punishments Gregory metes out to his erstwhile tormentors. (Pity poor Mr Patrick who taught him the causes of the French Revolution.) *Grange Hill* meets *Seven* in this slick and funny first novel.

**The Oxford Book of Nature Writing** edited by Richard Mabey (OUP, £7.99) After sternly declaring "The pieces included in this text are all factual prose", it is unfortunate that the first choice commences: "Once upon a time there was a fierce war waged between the Birds and the Beasts..." But once Aesop is out of the way, nature reveals its incomparable superiority of invention compared to the weedy efforts of man. Mabey demonstrates how nature has consistently inspired tender, perceptive writing by both

scientists and *literati*. The poet William Cowper writes movingly about the different personalities in a family of hares he adopted, while biologist Niko Tinberman notes that by marking wasps "they were transformed into acquaintances". This is one of the most readable and revealing of anthologies.

**The Inklings** by Humphrey Carpenter (HarperCollins, £8.99) Not to be confused with the vocal harmony group The Inkspots – though they were of much the same period – the Inklings were a weedy bunch of Oxford eggheads who liked nothing better than a natter about *Beowulf* while knocking back a noggin or two. They revolved round C S Lewis, J R R Tolkien and Charles Williams (who, unlike the other two, did not gain a vast readership for his cranky thrillers). Despite an unfortunate chapter devoted to an imaginary record of this dusty gang ("Well, Tollers, I still don't know how you keep up your story so magnificently. It hasn't flagged for a moment"), Carpenter's masterly portrait of intellectuals at play is unexpectedly entertaining. Whether their demanding company would be so enjoyable in the flesh is doubtful.

**Appassionata** by Jilly Cooper (Corgi, £6.99) Only Jilly Cooper could get away with a sexy blockbuster set among the stars of the international classical music circuit. Well, not sexy exactly, but definitely gap-toothed earthy. These pointy-bosomed flautists, big-bottomed sopranos and pig-tailed conductors don't sit about in hotel rooms practising their scales. They're out seducing the socks off each other, especially the book's heroine, Abigail Rosen, a highly strung violinist turned conductor who is prepared to sacrifice everything for a night of passion in an airport Hilton. Even though they have exchanged riding whips for batons and bows, Cooper's characters might just as well be mounting horses as podiums, but, being the old pro that she is, it doesn't seem to matter.

Biting the Dust: the joys of housework by Margaret Horsfield, Fourth Estate, £14.99

**E**ver found yourself waxing a floor at 2am, polishing a sink or cleaning the shower tiles with a toothpick in the aftermath of an emotional whirlwind? Far from being an unsy subject worth a desultory section in the most mind-numbing of mags, housework appears in Margaret Horsfield's delightful *Biting the Dust* as a subject closer to our hearts than we care to admit. "Whether we flap or scrub, the activities of cleaning often signify something quite apart from the business of chasing dirt," she argues: "women talk of the calming effect that cleaning has upon them, the virtuous radiance it sometimes imparts."

Of course, such remarks reflect a largely female perspective on the cleaning-thing, and one which was heartily pooh-poohed by such second-wave feminists as Simone de Beauvoir and Betty Friedan. But Horsfield, a former contributor to *Woman's Hour*, bravely declares housework a胎教 joy. As they haul their dirty secret out for a very public airing, the ladies of the chamois reveal that many women find

Julie Wheelwright encounters the women with irons in their souls

mundane domestic tasks soothing, cathartic or even pleasurable, while others pour invective on the subject. Whatever our politics, housework is deeply emotive.

Many women among Horsfield's 100-plus interviewees confessed that they found cleaning akin to a religious observance. Moira massaged her kitchen floor with a variety of ungents while waiting to hear news of a critically ill brother; another fell into a frenzy of polishing the night before her son's funeral, while the author nursed a broken heart by scouring coffee mugs. For women, cleaning is the ultimate displacement activity.

Firesworks are also sparked by the depressing confirmation that even New Man has yet to discover the bog brush, and that women become their mothers when

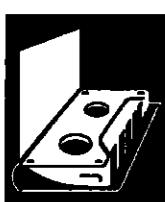
mopping the floor. Panic attacks of house-cleaning are still common before a mother sets foot in her daughter's home, no matter how high-powered her progeny. Horsfield admits to polishing cutlery, waxing a wooden chair and scraping the grease from cooker knobs before a recent maternal visit. "Why? Because my mother makes me feel like a lazy slut, though she would never say anything of the kind. But I know she suffers, often loudly, if a house is dirty. Such suffering makes me wince."

Cleaners, too, have their part in the story. Working as a professional maid at a Scottish hotel, Horsfield came to admire the head house-cleaner Alice, for "her unfailing ability to control our bus". Cleaners emerge in anecdote, from a tawdry of historic cleaning manuals, and from the professionals' own experience, as potent figures with the power to dominate lesser mortals.

Horsfield has rooted out a whole new branch of inquiry for cultural scholars. The fascinating chapters on maternal mentors and on men's aversion to cleaning especially cry out for further investigation. Horsfield also tread the line between rigorous research and entertaining narrative with a fine grace, with feeling and an acerbic wit.

And now, if you'll excuse me, I've got a lampshade that's just screaming to be hoovered.

## Audiobooks



**N**othing sums up the changed approach of the British to India more vividly than the different way Rudyard Kipling and Mark Tully tell plain tales from the hills. Kipling's *The Man Who Would Be King*

Christina Hardymon

(ABM, 80mins, £6.99) is the story of the terrible fate of two "gentlemen at large" who set up as gods in the Hindu Kush. Read with bloodthirsty gusto by Richard Mitchley. I'd have been happier without the long *apologia pro vita sua* that prefaces Mark Tully's *The Heart of India* (Chivers, 7hrs 35mins, £5.99) but once it was over, Tully's skill in creating intimate tales from local triumphs and disasters in his adopted country of the Uttar Pradesh, read in his own inimitable voice, made this one of my favourite ever audio listeners.

Christina Hardymon

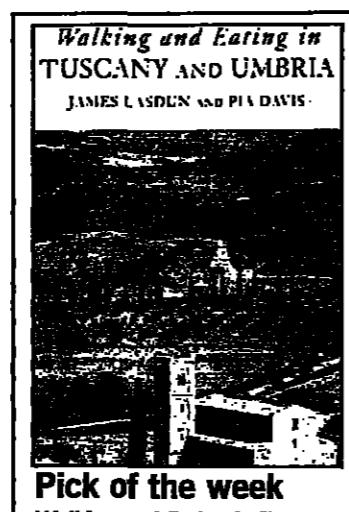
## Independent choice: kitchen culture

By Jane Jakeman

**W**e don't just eat; we use food to demonstrate our style, beliefs and identity. A new crop of books displays the range of current trends: Green Eating, Tuscan Peasant, Scholarly, Country House and Dinner-Party Chic.

I once tried shopping in a remote Lincolnshire village surrounded by vast acres of prime soil all bursting with veggies. The local shop had some spindly blotted carrots that could have seen service in *The Hand of Dracula* and some pensionable onions. The vitamin-filled fresh local produce was all destined for distant supermarkets. So I need no convincing that the most important food issue, the fundamental quality of what we eat, is raised by Kate de Selincourt's *Local Harvest: Delicious Ways to Save the Planet* (Lawrence & Wishart, £11.99).

Her book exposes horrors such as supermarket Chicken Kiev: "made largely from reconstituted, mashed chicken skin with fragments of muscle meat" and the dishonest labelling which permits Danish bacon to appear as "British", or the RSPCA's Freedom Foods guidelines, which allow sows to be kept in savagely cruel farrowing crates and battery hens to be debeaked. This book passionately argues that eating local organically farmed produce is tastier, kinder and healthier.



Pick of the week  
*Walking and Eating in Tuscany and Umbria*

The monks are renowned for their olive oil.

Here all roads lead to obscure rustic *alberghi* which would otherwise go undiscovered and the authors have a New York toughness in assessing food standards and prices. I started this book with extreme anti-pseud prejudice, but it ended up as my favourite. I was won over by mouthwatering details: little Pienza cheeses rolled in herbs and crushed peppers, pigeon-stock sauces flavoured with truffles – and by the refreshing emphasis on taking buses.

I turned in some dread to the scholarly offering, *The Official Foodie Handbook* once nailed the scholar-cook to the wall, as one whose days were spent transcribing phrases such as "splatte tharte pyke" from dusty manuscripts while existing on a diet of dyed kippers and biscuits. Happily, John Evelyn, Cook (Prospect Books, £25.50) is the work of the late, lamented, and

utterly credible, Christopher Driver.

It contains more than 300 recipes from Evelyn's 17th-century manuscript "receipt" book, lucidly edited, to which Driver has added a loving glossary which includes an intriguing contribution from Elizabeth David on *cantimplora*, an early device for cooling wine. But Evelyn was no Pepys; he was a dry stylist and this book is a case where the modern editor was a better writer than his source.

Historically inclined foodies will also enjoy Christina Hardymon's *Behind the Scenes: Domestic Arrangements in Historic Houses* (The National Trust, £24.99). This is the forgotten aspect of Country House cuisine, its below-stairs preparation. The book is meticulously researched, focusing on the kitchens and commissariat staff. It is lavishly illustrated, though the photographs show the preternaturally clean and tidy domestic scenarios of National Trust kitchens. Couldn't they have dirtied them up a bit? But if you want to know exactly how a Victorian dairy operated, Hardymon will tell you – and she has probably crawled inside the chums. Mrs Bridges with balls.

Finally, the latest and most gruesome example of Dinner-Party Chic, *Last Dinner on the Titanic, Menus and Recipes from the Great Liner* by Rick Archbold and Dana McCauley (Weidenfeld, £9.99). Not only the recipes that were served to the doomed passengers, but "suggestions on setting the mood, decorating the table and presenting each dish" to evoke the ambience. Highly topical: one for "Tory tables".

Generally, Miller's anecdotes are sparse, over-abstract and fussy. His stories – of St Catherine of Siena in 1370 inhaling and sucking the suppurating breast cancer sores of a fellow nun as an act of self-mortification, Charles Darwin's disgust when a native of Tierra del Fuego touches his food, and the revision of a white New Yorker in 1852 when Argentines try to shake his hand – lack the rich plenitude of Burton's anecdote. Nor, except in Catherine's case, are they repulsive

## Gross natural products

Richard Davenport-Hines defines the yuck factor

**F**or William Ian Miller, who is an American professor of law, disgust is a "marvelously promiscuous and ubiquitous" emotion, at once vigorous, familiar, strange and estranging. The preoccupation with self-interest in modern western political thought and the pathologising of sexuality in the 20th century have, he argues, made us forget how many of an individual's life choices are determined by revulsion.

Miller examines how ethical judgements invoke the idiom of disgust in such phrases as "What disgusting behaviour!" He recalls that early Christians thought of "sin and hell as raising excremental stench and loathsome prospects". Disgust, he concludes, ranks as a more important emotion than envy, jealousy, anger, fear, regret, guilt, sorrow, grief or shame because it "installs large chunks of the moral world right at the core of our identity, seamlessly uniting body and soul".

He insists that Montaigne, La Rochefoucauld and Robert Burton's 17th-century *Anatomy of Melancholy* are "more eloquent about human motives than the mean, cheap reductive narratives of psychoanalysis. Unfortunately, Miller cannot rival Burton as a stylist or in the vivid superabundance of his anecdotes.

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**The Anatomy of Disgust**  
by William Ian Miller,  
Harvard University Press, £16.50

enough. The Victorian explorer John Speke's taste for eating the embryos of pregnant animals he had killed, and the disgust of his African huntsman at this contempt for fertility, is not mentioned by Miller but is exactly the kind of authentically disgusting anecdote he should have deployed more often.

Miller's generalisations about food, vomit and shit can be delightfully provocative. As disgust

substances the most revolting to men... because it appears under conditions that are dignity-destroying." Most men's experience of semen comes from the cheerful sterility of a good wank, but Miller seems to have forgotten what this is like: "The horror of semen is that it has the power to feminise... because it is sexual, fertilizing and reproductive."

Too often his personal attitudes are disguised in the armour and accoutrements of a general critique. He understands the power of cultural determinants of disgust, without realising how eccentrically personal his judgements are. Miller analyses at length the "contaminating" effect of a tattooed builder with jeans "worn low so that when he bent over his rear fissure (oh, the trials of decorum!) was exposed". The most ludicrous moment comes when Miller's wife, in a T-shirt with the slogan "Save endangered mammals", meets the builder wearing a T-shirt of his own, which has "crack kills" inscribed beneath a cartoon of a human being crushed between the cheeks of a naked backside.

Arguably more disgusting than sartorially challenged builders are parents who find transcendent meaning in the potty-training of their children and insist on sharing every moment of the revelation, "Changing diapers." Miller announces, "is emblematic of the unconditional quality of nurturing parental love." He publishes his own experiences of toilet training with a lack of restraint for which his children may not thank him. His daughter "felt such a revulsion to faeces... that she refused to wipe herself for fear of contaminating her hand", while his son "not only removed underpants but the pants over them if one drop of urine dripped out after he went to the bathroom". *Chacun à son dégoût*.

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Cooking's more fun in a gay kitchen

## Clean round the bend

**J**ulie Wheelwright encounters the women with irons in their souls

mundane domestic tasks soothing, cathartic or even pleasurable, while others pour invective on the subject. Whatever our politics, housework is deeply emotive.

Many women among Horsfield's 100-plus interviewees confessed that they found cleaning akin to a religious observance. Moira massaged her kitchen floor with a variety of ungents while waiting to hear news of a critically ill brother; another fell into a frenzy of polishing the night before her son's funeral, while the author nursed a broken heart by scouring coffee mugs. For women, cleaning is the ultimate displacement activity.

Firesworks are also sparked by the depressing confirmation that even New Man has yet to discover the bog brush, and that women become their mothers when

mopping the floor. Panic attacks of house-cleaning are still common before a mother sets foot in her daughter's home, no matter how high-powered her progeny. Horsfield admits to polishing cutlery, waxing a wooden chair and scraping the grease from cooker knobs before a recent maternal visit. "Why? Because my mother makes me feel like a lazy slut, though she would never say anything of the kind. But I know she suffers, often loudly, if a house is dirty. Such suffering makes me wince."

Cleaners, too, have their part in the story. Working as a professional maid at a Scottish hotel, Horsfield came to admire the head house-cleaner Alice, for "her unfailing ability to control our bus". Cleaners emerge in anecdote, from a tawdry of historic cleaning manuals, and from the professionals' own experience, as potent figures with the power to dominate lesser mortals.

Horsfield has rooted out a whole new branch of inquiry for cultural scholars. The fascinating chapters on maternal mentors and on men's aversion to cleaning especially cry out for further investigation. Horsfield also tread the line between rigorous research and entertaining narrative with a fine grace, with feeling and an acerbic wit.

And now, if you'll excuse me, I've got a lampshade that's just screaming to be hoovered.

this

جذب و جذب

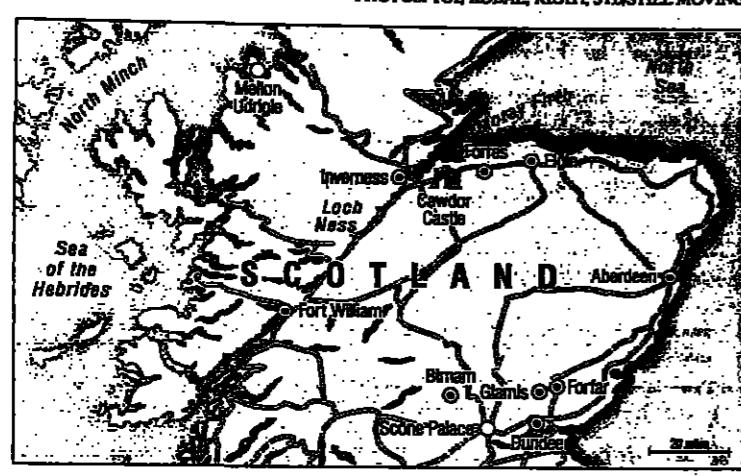
# travel & outdoors

On the trail of Disney in  
Paris, Florida – and  
Lincolnshire.....12/13  
What are the realities of a  
ban on hunting.....16/17



Above, Polanski's interpretation of 'Macbeth'. Right: the dramatic setting of Glamis Castle

PHOTOS: TOP KOBAL; RIGHT STILLS MOVING



From the heart of the Highlands to Scotland's west coast, history and mystery merge. Stephen Walsh and Amanda Williams unravel the route of Macbeth, while Andrew Marr braves a rugged, liquid landscape.



## Is this a quest I see before me?

We knew not to expect too much of the Elgin weather. As we drove past Cawdor Castle, just 10 miles up the road, the sky lit up electrically. So before you could say "when shall we three meet again" we were turning off, making Macbeth through thunder, lightning and rain, in search of Macbeth.

Why start at Cawdor? Those whose familiarity with Shakespeare's play has endured beyond their hasty departure from the GCSE exam room will know that Macbeth, already Thane of Glamis, is rewarded by King Duncan with the thaneship of Cawdor after defeating the treacherous incumbent and his Norwegian allies. Since it is the witches – the Weird Sisters – who pass the word on that this bit of good fortune is at hand, we were ready for some spooky, Dark Age atmospherics.

Disappointment followed. Even in the storm, Cawdor Castle had a mellow exterior set in lush gardens, with a maze and impeccable floral displays. It isn't even a battlemented wreck; it has pretty, stepping-stone gable-ends and a perfect set of storm-resistant sash windows. It is rather lovely, which was all well and good, but not exactly evocative of murderous happenings. Finding the interior similarly comfortable – plenty of pretty tapistry and furniture, but precious little in the dungeon department – we began to wonder whether we were in the right place.

In the gift shoppe we searched in vain for Macbeth-y gifts. (Is this a dagger which I see before me? No, it's a genuine sheep's wool belly-button warmer.) A browse through the bookshop revealed that the place was selling itself on its Macbeth associations, but subtly: the castle, said the blurb, was "romantically linked by Shakespeare with Macbeth". A short trawl through the history books on the shelves revealed how romantically: the real King Macbeth's date of birth was about 1005; the castle came into being some 500 years later.

Oh well, we told ourselves, there's always tomorrow. (And tomorrow and tomorrow.) In the wind and the rain the heathland around Forres – the supposed location for the meeting with the witches, according to Act 1, Scene 3 – was more convincing. In the town itself we came across the ancient bit of glass-enclosed masonry called Sueno's Stone, and since in Act 1, Scene 1, Sueno is named as head Norwegian, we felt on track.

We headed down the A9 for a quick run round Scone Palace, ancient coronation place of the Scottish kings, before setting off up the A94 towards Forfar and Glamis.

The approach to Glamis was everything we wanted. Pine forests accumulating in the rolling Angus countryside; the mile-long road to Glamis Castle, with five-storey, turreted towers glimpsed precipitately in the distance ... Surely here was a place where dark deeds had been done. But again, the plot fell flat. Magnificent rooms, sure enough, and dramatic sights, but not the right drama. The only echo of Macbeth lay in a pair of weird sisters, Americans on a cultural-vultural bus-tour: "This is the most comfortable castle we've seen," they told us.

Just as comfortable as Cawdor, in other words, and just as fatally flawed in the contemporaneity department (400 years, too late for Macbeth this time). With commendable honesty – or perhaps commercial sense – the castle tour focused on extant royalties rather than historical ones, with photographs from the Queen Mother's childhood adorning the exhibition room.

Discouraged, we stopped the night in a horrible camping and caravanning club site in Scone, horrible because the site wardens, like youth hostel administrators of old, keep a moral rein on their customers' behaviour and movement is *verbotten* after

11pm. We defiantly burned the midnight oil, pouring the whisky and poring over the text. We resolved to give Shakespeare one more chance. Deciding that if our tour were to have a satisfactory denouement we would find it in Act V, we read through to the end. In spite of his dirty deeds, we recalled, Macbeth would be safe unless Birnam Wood – aka the English in camouflage, as it turns out – came to high Dunsinane Hill.

A search through the gazetteer found Dunsinane back in the direction of Forres; the road didn't reach the hill there, but we struggled along a path, climbed a small mound and ticked it off.

Birnam, twinned with Dunkeld by BR, was easier to locate. We arrived there thinking only of glancing at a tree or two, calling it a day and pronouncing the journey a failure. But at Birnam we got answers as well as trees. In a shopping mall selling whisky marmalade, boney liqueurs and See You Jimmy hats, a quasi-quid sound-and-light show called the Macbeth Experience made sense of the whole murky saga.

The answer lay in the bits of our copy we'd skipped: the appendix with the sources of the play. As the Macbeth Experi-

ence explained, Shakespeare worked from a history book called *Holinshed's Chronicles*, and Holinshed's 15th-century version of the Scottish past made use of poetic licence on a scale even the Bard couldn't match. It was from Holinshed that Shakespeare received the false notion that King Macbeth was at Glamis and at Cawdor. Worse, he had also picked up the idea that Macbeth was bloody and barbarous, which provided the basis for centuries of popular distortion.

It was a bit humbling to put in the picture by something as profoundly unilitary as the Macbeth Experience. After a tourist promo video for Perthshire – golf courses and battles, mainly – we got the detailed gen. Macbeth, born in 1005, tried to take his rightful place as heir in a complicated succession pattern. Duncan, however saintly in Shakespeare's play, not only jumped the queue but was a bloody king, too; hence the fact that Macbeth killed him off. Macbeth then ruled for 17 years – which were peaceful enough for him to make a pilgrimage to Rome in 1050.

At the close of the exhibition Macbeth was put in a line of succession of Scottish heroes who have striven against the Eng-

lish. Macbeth himself, "the last great king of Scotland"; Robert the Bruce and "Braveheart" Wallace, scourges of various King Edwards; Bonnie Prince Charlie, doomed romantic, and the SNP. "We've had some complaints about the last one," said the girl who let us out. "But only from English visitors." It seemed a fair enough line of succession to our party, made up of one from each side of the border, and it was hard historical fact compared with our itinerary which, we realised, was based on a great deal of fantasy. Yet in following Shakespeare, at least we were in pretty high-class footsteps as far as invention was concerned.

**Cawdor Castle** (01667 4044615), off the A96 between Nairn and Inverness, is open daily 1 May–12 October, 10am–5.30pm; adults £5, children £2.70, concessions £4. **Glamis Castle** (01307 340242), about 10 miles north of Dundee, is also open daily – until 6 October, 10am–5.30pm; adults £5, children £2.60, concessions £3. **The Macbeth Experience** at Birnam (01738 787696) is open daily all year round, 9.30am–7pm (April–October, 9am–8pm); adults £2, concessions £1.50.

### SCOTTISH DEPARTURES

Individual fares on ScotRail services are £11.80 for the 34-mile stretch from Edinburgh to Aviemore, for example, so an unlimited travel deal is strongly recommended. Cheapest is the Festival Cities Return ticket, which allows you to travel between Glasgow, Edinburgh and Stirling, with exchanges around Fife and to North Berwick. It is valid for any three days' travel in a week, and costs £25.

The ScotRail Rover covers the entire network. The options are £62 for any four days out of eight, £90 for eight consecutive days, £118 for 12 days out of 15. Only slightly more expensive is the Freedom of Scotland Roverpass, which includes free use of Caledonian MacBrayne ferries. For eight consecutive days the cost is £98, and longer periods are available. More details from National Rail inquiries on 0845 484950.

#### Cycling through

The journey from Carlisle to Inverness is covered by two maps (7b and 7c) in the National Cycle Network series, published by Footprint and available from cycle stores or direct from Sustrans (0117 926 8893).

#### Cruise the Caledonian Canal

Join a voyage aboard *Fingal of Caledonia*, a 212-foot three-decked boat which will be travelling northern Scotland through the summer. The canal links Inverness to Fort William, and includes patches of open water such as Loch Ness. The voyage lasts six days, with options for hiking, cycling and canoeing. The price is in the range £300 to £400, including all meals, through Caledonian Discovery (01397 772167).

#### Walking across

Scotland's coast-to-coast footpath is the 212-mile Southern Upland Way, which traverses the south of the country from Portpatrick near Stranraer to Cockburnspath near Berwick. Details from the Ranger Service of Scottish Borders Council (01835 830281) for details of the eastern portion, or the Dumfries & Galloway Council on 01387 261234.



Oban Croft:  
"the last  
house by the  
shore"

## Paradise in a rainstorm

For those who make the journey to wet, wind-swept Wester Ross the rewards lie in a feast for the eye matched only by the promise of the menus. By Andrew Marr

There is a trick that Wester Ross plays. Just as you are driving back up and east across Scotland, leaving the long sea-lochs and weaving through the mountains, you take a last look back and see an explosion of colour.

The water turns emerald and purple-blue, there are detonations of yellow and scarlet which will be travelling northern Scotland through the summer. The canal links Inverness to Fort William, and includes patches of open water such as Loch Ness. The voyage lasts six days, with options for hiking, cycling and canoeing. The price is in the range £300 to £400, including all meals, through Caledonian Discovery (01397 772167).

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waterproofs, through raw wind and horizontal rain.

And it was wonderful. Wester Ross plays.

ross plays as if not sun-worshippers or easily bored urban Channel-hoppers. Its awesome mountains and extraordinary vistas, which make all those Victorian engravers and School-of-Landscape painters look like photo-realists, are well protected from the rest of Britain – by distance, most obviously, but also by climate. In winter, the days are short. The wind rarely dies. Colour sinks and disappears. Summers can produce sudden hot spells, but also bring the midges. Spring and autumn are the best times, but they are not ... well, predictably good.

And all this is a blessing, if well disguised in sheets of rain: many years ago I remember hearing in a corner of Wester Ross we know well, a croft house offering sumptuous breakfasts – local kippers, duck eggs, griddle scones –

that once people at home heard about it, this Scottish coast would be "covered with hotels like

roaring open fires, and excellent dinners, including venison, trout,

wonderful Scottish cheeses and a boggling sequence of puddings."

It was a good Scottish welcome, though. Mairi and Roger Beeson are typical of many modern Highlanders: they met in a London advertising agency and moved north only recently. Their Oban Croft ("the last house by the shore") is near Mellon Udrigle beach and looks out at a vast sweep of sea: the Summer Isles and the Sutherland mountains.

We left after four nights, well blown about and rain-washed, but also seriously distended. For those prepared to take a short flight from London, and fed up with France, it's worth looking north.

Roger and Mairi Beeson can be contacted at Oban Croft, Laide, Achtnashine, Wester Ross IV22 2NU (01445731548).

WORLDCOVER

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Simon Calder

**Click. Then a small, tinny cough. 'Due to train failure the 23.36 has been cancelled'**

Last week, as Michael Williams reported in *The Independent*, the last British Rail trains departed for oblivion. All rail operations are now in private hands.

Clinging to the eccentric notion that I should be able to travel without owning a car, I set off to see friends in Hertfordshire by privatised train. The words of the Transport Secretary, promising "All the signs are that we are heading towards a new golden age for the railway", led me to expect a problem-free journey.

After a jolly evening I arrived at the station in good time for the last train to London, confident that dismal experiences with British Rail – where the final departure gets cancelled, and it takes you hours to get home because BR has to organise taxis – would not be repeated.

**Click. Small, tinny cough, then "Due to train failure, the 23.36 from Hertford North has been cancelled". Click.**

West Anglia Great Northern, which runs (or fails to run) trains on the line, has solved the problem of passengers getting cross with station staff by removing the staff from stations. So a disembodied voice informs travellers that the last train has been cancelled.

By now it is midnight, and there has been no crackly public address suggestion about what arrangements are to be made for passengers with no way to get home.

I try this: you phone directory enquiries to find the number for the company's head office in Cambridge. There follows a disconcerting interlude where the operator asks: "Is that Cambridge in Cambridgeshire or Gloucestershire?" Having assured her it is the more celebrated of the two, you are told the number for National Rail Enquiries rather than anything for local calamities.

You ring constantly for 20 minutes, getting the engaged tone every time. Evidently the way that West Anglia Great Northern avoids that messy, expensive business of organising taxis is by making itself entirely uncontrollable.

My friends were remarkably polite considering that I turned up on their doorstep again in the early hours of Sunday morning hoping for a place to sleep. And I finally arrived back at King's Cross just nine hours late. Is this a record for a 15-mile journey?

**One of the better developments of British Rail shortly before it was disbanded was to introduce in-train magazines. But a line in the current edition of the handy West Coast publication 20:20 unwittingly helps the image of the decline of the railways.**

The subject of the article is Preston, one of Britain's great rail towns. But you would never guess so from the story, whose most telling quote is: "At the moment Preston is a place you pass by on the motorway". Rail passengers thereby get the not-so-subliminal message that they really should be travelling by car. Maybe I should buy one after all.

Simon Calder

Columnist

# Springtime in Big Thunder Mountain

**John Watkins clocks a day in Disneyland Paris, which celebrates its 5th birthday today**

*John Watkins took the Eurostar to Marne la Vallée/Chessy, better known as Disneyland Paris, accompanied by his children Joe (12) and Sam (10). This is his minute-by-minute account of a day in the park*

9am Enter park.

9.05am First disappointment. Big Thunder Mountain roller coaster closed. Worryingly, cast member cites "lack of traction". Told to come back in an hour.

9.20am Cross to Discoveryland.

Second disappointment: Sam too small for Space Mountain – but lip quivers bravely quelled. Joe and I undaunted. Inside holding-area, glimpse roller-coaster roaring through darkness. Joe thinks he's developed a serious heart condition and wants out. Involuntary groan as Columbiad is catapulted up launch tube into blackness. Car twists through asteroid belt, pauses before cheezy moon, then ploughs to earth.

10am Nausea subsiding, prepare to board Star Tours' Endor Express.

Novice pilot Rex takes wrong turn and crashes into workshop. Get trapped inside huge ice crystal. Then stray into combat zone and have to be escorted to safety. Phew.

10.50am Autopia. Forced to employ blocking tactics to prevent unruly French scouts muscling past us.

Question: why are grown men with tattoos so keen to drive cars with lawn-mower engines?

11.45am Hot dogs at Casey's Cor-

ner. Main Street, just in time for Toy Story Parade. Green plastic soldiers particularly impressive. See Mickey holding court at top of small flight of stairs.

12.37pm After painful and protracted deliberation, make our purchases at the Toy Store. Sorcerer's Apprentice Mickey for Sam; velvety-black panther Bagheera for Joe.

1pm Catch train to Frontierland.

Fend off aggressive geese craving popcorn.

1.45pm Spot Pluto and Minnie outside Cowboy Cookout Barbecue. Minnie gives Sam autograph and kiss. Pluto more interested in young French girls stroking his nose.

1.10pm Big Thunder Mountain now open. Shuffle past ancient belt-driven machines into old mine.

1.20pm Still shuffling. Sudden suspicion that some of these buckets and oil lamps may be real.

1.30pm Can't work out queuing pattern. Didn't we pass that boiler a few moments ago?

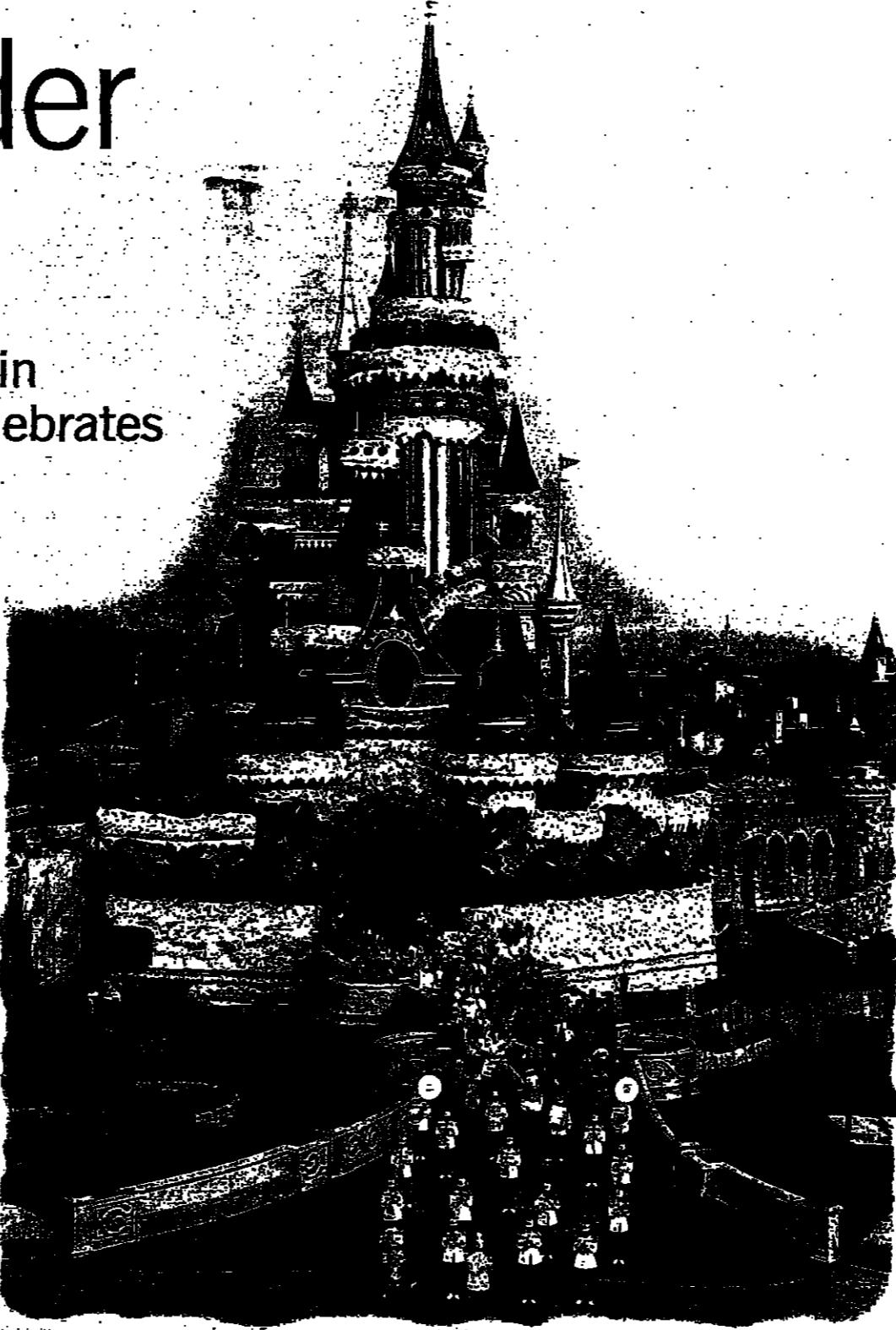
1.44pm Board runaway train. Cast member Olive nonchalantly swings her six-shooter. Duck involuntarily as we career through low tunnel and just evade a rock fall.

2pm Target practice at Rustler Roundup Shootin' Gallery. Uncertain if it's our shots making rooster lay, coffins open, cans spin etc.

2.30pm Waft past phantom dancers and diners in the Haunted House.

Emerge in Boot Hill graveyard.

3pm Head for Adventureland.



'1.30pm: can't work out queuing system...'

Miraculously, Sam has grown an inch and can ride on Indiana Jones and Temple of Doom. Joe decides to sit this one out. Queue in authentic bamboo grove before emerging at foot of ancient Mayan temple encircled by rickety-looking track. Cranked up and up, then staggering plunge into loop-the-loop.

3.20pm Regain composure in Swiss Family Robinson's Treehouse. Tree definitely not wooden and river smells of chlorine, but rooms evocatively detailed.

4pm Join Pirates of the Caribbean and are pitched into fearsome piratical battle. Buildings flame. Cannonballs splash. Brigands roister.

4.50pm Inspired by the pirates, Joe and Sam stage their own fight. Both informed that next aggressive act will incur a 20-pence fine.

5.10pm Enter Fantasyland and Alice's Curious Labyrinth. Surprisingly enjoyable, especially hookah-smoking caterpillar and ranting Queen of Hearts. From castle, we view Fantasy skyline: crooked houses, minarets, pointed towers.

5.55pm All suffering from sore legs, feet etc. Premium on relaxing rides. Cruise through Storybook Land in a pink boat. Joe hopes we don't see anyone we know.

6.15pm Revived by popcorn sugarburst. Take a spin Mad Hatter's Tea Cups, then queue for Dumbo the Flying Elephant. Divert children with mathematical poser. If 16 elephants each carry two people, and

rides last one-and-a-half minutes, how long do we have to wait if there are still 67 people in front of us?

6.30pm Sun disappears behind Toad Hall.

6.30pm Get to ride Flying Elephants. Agree it wasn't worth the wait.

7.20pm Pizza at Pizzeria Bella Notte.

Indiana Jones on Joe's mind: he wonders if you could vomit on your own head in the loop-the-loop. Vows to go on ride first thing tomorrow.

Trees twinkle. Floodlights illuminate spires of Sleeping Beauty's Castle.

8.45pm Catch train for Frontierland. Blue neon crackles on Space Mountain. Myriad white lights turn Hotel Disney into luminous two-dimensional dot-to-dot.

9.10pm Return to Big Thunder Mountain. Train like cartoon silhouette. Exhilarated by rushing descent past luminous bals and red warning lights. Go round again.

10pm Back to Main Street for Electric Parade. Cinderella's carriage in a thousand tiny glittering lights. Fireworks over Frontierland.

10.45pm Return to Santa Fe Hotel. Notice volcano at bottom of road.

11pm Totally exhausted. Crash out in Mexican-style room with ceiling fan and 16-channel TV.

Numerous operators sell package holidays to Disneyland Paris; some companies also offer day-trips. Eurostar (0345 303030) runs direct trains from London Waterloo.

TEL: 0171 293 2222

10am Catch train to Fantasyland. Joe and Sam are now fully recovered. Sam has grown an inch and can ride on Indiana Jones and Temple of Doom. Joe decides to sit this one out. Queue in authentic bamboo grove before emerging at foot of ancient Mayan temple encircled by rickety-looking track. Cranked up and up, then staggering plunge into loop-the-loop.

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6.30pm Get to ride Flying Elephants. Agree it wasn't worth the wait.

7.20pm Pizza at Pizzeria Bella Notte.

Indiana Jones on Joe's mind: he wonders if you could vomit on your own head in the loop-the-loop. Vows to go on ride first thing tomorrow.

Trees twinkle. Floodlights illuminate spires of Sleeping Beauty's Castle.

8.45pm Catch train for Frontierland. Blue neon crackles on Space Mountain. Myriad white lights turn Hotel Disney into luminous two-dimensional dot-to-dot.

9.10pm Return to Big Thunder Mountain. Train like cartoon silhouette. Exhilarated by rushing descent past luminous bals and red warning lights. Go round again.



# Where nostaglia meets live action



Giving it the hard shoulder: the collections are extensive, the activities are exciting and the facilities look superb. Those looking for live action should try out the quad bikes

Where can you admire a 1896 Wolseley and then go quad bike racing? The Gafford family visits the Motor Heritage Centre at Gaydon. By Catherine Stebbings

The Heritage Motor Centre is one of Britain's newest museums. The art deco-style building, set in 65 acres, is as startling as the collection it holds. Adjoined to a huge conference centre, which subsidises it, the Motor Centre is slick and efficiently run by the British Motor Industry Heritage Trust, which was established to collect and conserve artefacts, records and vehicles from those companies which over the years have come together to form the Rover Group.

It holds more than 300 vehicles, marking the development of the British motor industry from the 1890s to the present day. The 200 cars on display date from the earliest 1896 Wolseley. It is an exhilarating collection of everyday cars, extraordinary vehicles, prototypes that never went into production, the £2m Rover BRM Le Mans racing car, off-road and land-speed record vehicles.

Those looking for real action can try out the Quad bikes (weekends and holidays only) or a 4x4 demonstration as a passenger. There is a children's roadway with battery-operated cars and a nature trail. Imaginative tours of the museum allow children to dress up and climb into the cars.

**The visitors**  
Geoff Gafford, a solicitor, and his wife Amanda took their children Philippa, 14, and James, 12.

**Geoff:** The museum brought back my childhood. I loved it. There is an excellent collection of British cars, many of which I have driven, as well as interesting cars like the Land Rover taxi for the film *Judge Dredd* and the Morris Minor used by Miss Marple for the television series. I loved the 1950s cars. Just the smell of the leather

upholstery and the carpets is very special and quite unlike the smell of modern cars. The 1954 ZA MG Magnet is probably my pick of the collection.

The current exhibition on the Rover Jet Gas Turbine was fascinating. I've seen pictures of the Jet 1 so it was a treat actually to see the real thing.

**Amanda:** This was an excellent day for all four of us. It was like stepping into another world. The museum has a hi-tech feel about it, the whole place has been so thoughtfully laid out and the staff were friendly and helpful. There was a lovely atmosphere and it was an easy, relaxing day.

There was masses to see and do, whether you are a car enthusiast or not. The museum is in a great setting with good views and lots of space in and out.

**Philippa:** The building was like a spaceship, very modern and very exciting. I liked being driven in on the shuttle bus. It was not like a normal museum.

I found the tour very interesting. The guide told us about cars starting from the present day and going back to 1896.

I was interested in the cars upstairs which they had sown in half to show the engine, and I really liked the cars with character which came out of the 1960s, like the Minis.

**James:** This museum was really good. They trace the history of the motor car around the edge where they have a Time Road showing cars from the beginning to the present – even the surface of the road changes – and there are models of people wearing the costume of the period.

There were so many different sorts of cars: weird mini vans, sports cars, limousines, electric cars, loads of

Land Rovers, Morris, Triumphs, racing cars, police cars, etc. My favourites were the MG racing cars which could go over 200mph. The quad bikes were excellent. I have never been on anything as powerful as that. The 4x4 was good too. They took us on a very rough course.

## The deal

Entrance and fees: the Heritage Motor Centre, Gaydon (01926 641188) is just off junction 12 of the M40 near Warwick. Open daily except Christmas Day and Boxing Day, April–Oct 10am–6pm. Nov–March 10am–4:30pm. Adults £5.50, children (five–16) £3.50, under-fives free. OAP £4.50, Family Ticket (2 adults 3 children) £15. Family season ticket £30.

Access: there is a shuttle bus service operating from the car park to the museum and to the 4x4 course. Disabled access is excellent and includes a wheelchair lift on to shuttle.

Food: the restaurant serves a very high standard of full meals and snacks. Children's meals £1.75, full meals served between 12pm–2.30pm. £3.25–£4.25, include beef stew and dumplings, coq au vin, savoury pancakes. Picnic area outside.

Attractions: Quad bikes operate weekends and holidays only. Adults £2.50, children over 6 £1.50. 4x4 Land Rover off-road experience: Adults £2.50, children £1.50. Electric car roadway with mini Formula One cars for children aged six–12 £1.50. There is a large adventure playground and a nature trail. Colouring corner and model cars for children inside the museum and other events like treasure hunts are organised at busy times.

Forthcoming events include: 24–26 May Austin Seven 75th Anniversary; 15 June BMC Marque Day; 21–22 June All Rover Rally.



PHOTOGRAPH BY CHARLIE MURRAY/NEWSTEAM

## Are we nearly there?

Time-travel outings for children

**Coldharbour Mill Working Wool Museum,** Uffculme, Cullompton, Devon EX15 3EE (01884 840960), a working wool mill with a 200-year history. Outside are an old weaver's cottage, a dye workshop and a dye garden. Mon–Sun 10.30am–5pm until October (then Mon–Fri 10.30am–5pm). Adults £5, Children £2.50, Family tickets £13.50.

**The Art, The Archaeological Resource Centre,** St Saviourgate, York YO1 2NN (01904 654324) Ever wondered why people bother to dig up dusty bones and broken pots? The enthusiastic Dr Andrew Jones and his colleagues have created a museum to breathe life into archaeology. Visitors are encouraged to handle exhibits and, with assistance, to clean and identify fragments. Ideal for budding Indiana Joneses. Mon–Fri 10am–3.30pm; Sat 1pm–3.30pm. Entrance £3.50.

**Weald and Downland Open Air Museum,** Singleton, Chichester, Sussex PO18 0EU (01243 811348) is essentially committed to rescuing endangered

buildings, but a visit to this open-air site offers leisurely time travel. Buildings include an early medieval farmstead, and a Tudor farmhouse with a garden planted up appropriately, plus livestock. There are daily craft demonstrations. The orchards are currently in blossom, and there are lambs and calves. Mon–Sun 10.30am–5pm. Adults £4.90, children £2.30, family tickets £12. Dogs on leads welcome.

**White Cliffs Experience:** Roman Encounters and Our Finest Hours, Market Square, Dover, Kent (01304 214566). Centurions, coin-slicers and marine officers wander along an interactive Roman street where visitors can try their hands at mosaic, building roads, even invading Britain. Then take a time machine to Dover during the Second World War, with Pathé News footage, an animatronic show, and Forties shops.

Open Mon–Sun 10am–5pm. Adults £4 (25.50), children £3.25 (£4.25), family £12 (£17). Prices in brackets are for both attractions.

Charlotte Packer

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SCOTLAND

When will you go?

On Thursday the National Trust banned deer hunting on its estates. Meanwhile, if Labour wins the election it has pledged to hold

# Is this just a killing field?

Duff Hart-Davis  
presents a  
countryman's  
view

**T**he other morning we found that one of our barren ewes had broken a leg, and there was nothing for it but to put her down. Using a .22 rifle as a humane killer, I dispatched the poor creature painlessly – but at 7.30am we were left with a 150lb body to dispose of.

Luckily there was somewhere I could take it: the Berkeley Hunt kennels, 20 minutes' drive away. The hounds are still fed on raw meat, and the kennel staff run a flesh-collection service, whereby they pick up dead animals from farms in the district, or take in carcasses that are delivered. Farmers who allow the hunt access to their land pay only a token charge.

Were it not for the hunt, I would have been faced with the considerable expense of taking our ewe to an incinerator. What if the casualty had been a cow or horse, weighing half a ton or more? I do not

have the equipment to lift and transport so heavy an object. The Berkeley hounds eat more than 2,000 animals a year. If hunting were banned, and the pack dispersed, farmers in the area would face a huge disposal problem: to avoid the costs of incineration, many would bury

fallen stock, either in the ground or in manure-heaps, and leave them to rot. Multiply the Berkeley's 2,000 by the number of hunts that still collect flesh – at least 100 – and it is clear that a ban would create serious pollution.

A more emotive, yet equally

practical matter is the fate of fallen stock, either in the ground or in manure-heaps, and leave them to rot. Multiply the Berkeley's 2,000 by the number of hunts that still collect flesh – at least 100 – and it is clear that a ban would create serious pollution.

This is totally unrealistic. John Berkeley, president of the hunt and owner of the hounds, "would not be happy to see them go drag-hunting". There have been hounds at Berkeley Castle for 800 years, and to him, hunting

from the straightforward, high-speed dash along an artificially-laid trail that drag-hunting involves. He believes that most of the farmers who now support hunting would not tolerate the drag, and points out that, in any case, it needs far fewer hounds: six or

seven couple form an adequate pack – less than a quarter of what major hunts use for live operations.

John Fretwell, master of the Stow beagles, makes the point that hunting dogs are not domesticated, and could not be taken on as pets. "Nobody who lives in a house could give a working hound the exercise it needs," he says. "For six months a year our beagles hunt two days a week, and cover up to 40 miles a day," he says. "If they're not hunting, we walk them twice a day. People don't realise that for generations they've been bred to cover long distances, and if they don't get enough exercise, they become bored and destructive."

Thus many thousands of hounds would have to be put down. "Who is going to destroy 15,000 dogs?" asks Jonathan Ingleton, secretary of the Quorn for 15 years. "If somebody knocks down a single pet with their car, there's a riot. Imagine deliberately killing 15,000 hounds all at once: it's not feasible."

A ban would induce a similar glut of horses. About

60,000 horses and ponies are

now used primarily for hunting,

and a third of these would

become superfluous. The price

of a good hunter would fall

from £8,000-£5,000 to about

£1,000, and that of a moderate

horse from £2,000 to meat

price - £500. Perhaps 15,000

perfectly sound animals would go to the slaughterhouse,

and severe repercussions

would shake Ireland – a

prime source of hunters.

Also, at present, when

showjumpers and

steeplechasers

come to the end of

their competitive

careers, many get

another 10 years of

enjoyable life in the

hunting field. If

hunting ended,

nobody would want

to keep them on.

As for the effect

on foxes: the basis

of the present system is that

hunts take off the surplus pop-

ulation, culling old and dis-

eased animals first, and dis-

perse the rest, thus keeping

farmers happy and preserving

an ecological balance. Most

people agree that a ban would

be – paradoxically – disastrous

for the quarry.

In the Lake District the

Blencathra – John Peel's pack

no less – kills 100 foxes a year.

But Barry Iodhunster, the pre-

huntman, reckons that if a

ban came into force, "there'd

be an absolute free-for-all.

Every man, jack who could

carry a gun or set a snare

would be out there, and the fox

would be exterminated in

short order. The natural har-

mony and balance of this part

of the world would be over-

thrown." Other observers

point out that in East Anglia,

where there is relatively little

hunting, and gamekeepers rule

the roost, there are already far

fewer foxes than in prime

hunting areas.

The countryside itself would

deteriorate. Nobody disputes

the fact that hunting has done

much to embellish the land-

scape: in the course of two

centuries countless copse and

small coverts have been

planted, or retained, specif-

ically to harbour foxes, with

results pleasing to the human

eye and beneficial to other

forms of wildlife.

Few people realise how

much out-of-season work

hunts do to keep bridleways

and footpaths open. In Sussex, for instance, the Chiddington, Leconfield & Cowdray has renewed 260 field and hunting gates, as well as innumerable stiles, over the past five years, and reckons that the materials which it provides are alone worth more than £6,000 annually.

Most hunts own woods – the Quorn has 40. In the event of a ban presumably they would be sold; certainly they would be neglected and overgrown until new arrangements were sorted out.

In rural areas many jobs would disappear. After 26 years as a hunt servant, Barry Todhunter would lose everything: "Number one, my job. Number two, my house. Number three, my vehicle." Hundreds would be similarly deprived: grooms, drivers, vets, farriers.

Yet the most far-reaching effect would be on social activity. Townspeople can scarcely imagine how the hunt and its doings permeate every level of rural life. At any meet the age-range may stretch from 10 to 80, and people meet them every walk of life. Their aim is not to witness the death of a fox, but to ride in places to which they would otherwise have no access, to see the country and to gossip. The lure is the uncertainty about what may happen or where they may go. During the winter farmers talk constantly

about where the hunt has been and where it is going next. The more remote the area, the greater the bond the hunt creates.

The Berkeley, which is typical, has a hunt supporters' club with 500 mem-

bers, who may or

may not belong to the hunt itself. The

prime aim is to

organise social

functions and raise

funds for charitable

causes such as

schools and play-

groups. The club

holds fashion shows, discos, an

annual hunter-trail for novices,

and a four-mile fun-ride that

attracts 150 riders.

There is an open day at the kennels, and a terrier show featuring races and a human tug-of-war across a river, so that the losers are bound to get a ducking. The hunt also fields cricket and skittle teams. On the agricultural side, it gives numerous cups for best crops, runs an annual competition and exam for young farmers, and holds hedge-laying contests in order to perpetuate this age-old skill.

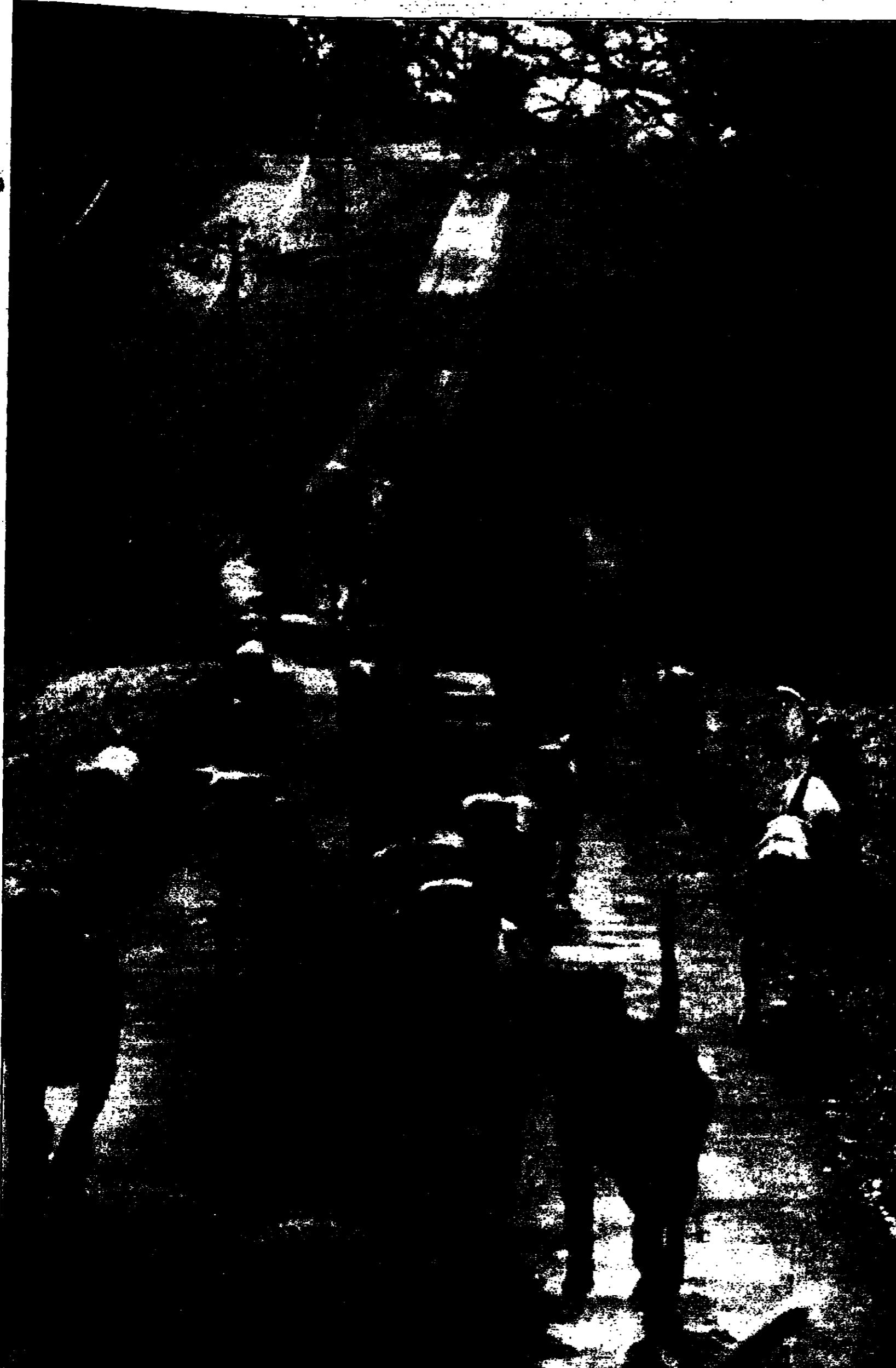
"Without all this," says Ted Waller, a Berkeley spokesman, "the country would be hollow. Life would go on, but it would be far more drab and soulless."

It is hardly surprising that, from elsewhere, one can hear mutters of rebellion. People are saying that, even if hunting is banned, they will carry on regardless; they will change the name of their pack from the Loamshire to the Loamshire Drag Hounds, and go through the motions of laying a trail. But if hounds happen to find a live fox, too bad – or, rather, great!

"After all," says one aficionado, "if the police can't be bothered to take action against half a dozen saboteurs acting illegally – as apparently they can't – how could they tackle 200 riders? And how could they prove that the hounds hadn't taken off on their own initiative?"



a Commons vote that could outlaw all such blood sports. So what would be the realities of a total ban on hunting with hounds?



Hunting dogs are not domesticated, and could not be taken on as pets. Without enough exercise hounds become destructive

# Riding into the fray

This week 'The Field' magazine charged into the political controversy. Jack O'Sullivan reports

You wouldn't automatically associate *The Field* with political controversy. The magazine, started in 1853 for the entertainment of country gentlemen, is normally unconcerned with the preoccupations of the chattering classes. The rules of lawn tennis and the design of the modern golf ball, both established in *The Field*, are more its line. Indeed, the last time the magazine led public debate was probably when it had its own correspondent reporting on the Crimean War and it published personal narratives from the Charge of the Light Brigade.

Its current edition is typical, with a piece on hunt pantomimes and helpful advertisements to meet every need of today's gentry - training for gun dogs, "a unique opportunity" for red deer stalking, safaris in southern Africa, mail-order sales for Barbour jackets and, of course, an entry giving details of how to hire "staff of distinction".

And for months, the chief talking point among the readership has not been politics but an extraordinarily useful revelation about how best to catch a salmon. Apparently, the angler's trick is to trim a little pubic hair from

the woman in his life  
and use it to make the fly  
— the female pheromones are  
said to send the cock salmon wild for  
the rod. The letters' column has been  
packed with readers offering confir-  
mation that they, too, have been suc-  
cessful with these little tufts and sug-  
gesting new names for the  
experimental fly — pub grub, bush

baby and frizzie lizzie are just some of the useful contributions to the debate. In this light, the robust and angry nature of *The Field's* May edition is a bit of a departure. It defiantly offers a "hit list" of 72 MPs, all with majorities under 5,000, who have declared their opposition to hunting. *The Field's* initiative is a sign of just how con-

initiative is a sign of just how concerned the hunting, shooting and fish-

ing brigade is about a pledge in Labour's manifesto to offer a free vote on whether hunting with hounds should be banned. The pledge, though weaker than the expected commitment that a Labour government would simply ban such sport, has aroused the ire of the publication's readers.

Jonathan Young, *The Field*'s editor, hopes that discerning voters will blackball the bounders who wish to ban the bloody pleasures of rural folk. *The Field* may have only 31,000 subscribers and thanks to the dentists' waiting-rooms, 290,000 readers, but there are, he says, 4.5 million country sport supporters. Even the likes of Malcolm Wicks, Labour MP for suburban Croydon North East and on the list of 75 MPs who have voiced their desire for a hunting ban, is expected to quake at the risk of offending the blood sports lobby. He and other targeted MPs must realise, says the magazine, that

"We feel," says Young, "that there is little to choose between Labour and the Conservatives, so there will be many single-issue voters this time around. We think this will be the single issue."

It isn't difficult to see why Mr.

Young is upset. If fox-hunting were banned, the hounds, he says, would be saved until the law was eventually overturned. "But the equestrian industry would take the most tremendous blow. The price of horses would fall. Point-to-point meetings would disappear in the long run because they are organised by hunts. There wouldn't be the volunteers to keep them going. That would be a terrible shame - Lord Gyllene, this year's Grand National winner, came from a point-to-point

stable."

Young believes that the whole hunting issue has become no more than an icon for class prejudice. "That is so outdated and outmoded," he says, arguing that hunting draws in country people from all walks of life.

He takes comfort in his belief that his Labour opponents are, in fact, in pursuit of the unattainable - that it will prove impossible to frame a law that bans hunting while continuing to permit hounds to be used to drive foxes in front of a line of guns. But Mr Young is also worried by fears that Labour will introduce controls on the access of the

"All of us were trained to use guns as young people," says Young. "So if you stop the under-18s owning them or having access to them, you will then lose the recruitment into the sport."

All in all, it looks like an unusually tough few months of campaigning ahead for *The Field*. Establishing a final name for that new salmon fly might be the easiest part.



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# Green thoughts in a green shade

Foliage is the architecture of a garden. From giant fennel to parsley fronds, Anna Pavord suggests some striking leaf combinations

All the gardeners I know (including me) are wandering round with soppy smiles on their faces. So far, it has been a fantastic spring. Soon the doom and gloom merchants will be reminding us of April's treachery and counting up the number of times snow has fallen this month to another pear blossom at birth.

But I'm on a roll. Already, I've weeded and wafted one large area of the bank. Wafting is the children's term for the fiddling sorts of jobs that you do to round off a session of heavier, more demanding tasks. It includes snipping dead bits from the leaves of irises, taking off a few dead twigs from the roses, nipping dead heads off the daffodils, training tendrils of clematis in different directions. Individually, none of the jobs amounts to much, but taken together, the effect is noticeable.

When the paths have been raked of winter debris and top-dressed with fresh gravel or crushed bark, bits of the garden will be looking almost kempt. That is unusual so early in the year. Having heavy clay, I am not used to being able to garden all through the winter, as we have this season. Last spring was so slow, so cold. This year, since the snowdrops, there has been a tumult of flowers: primroses of all kinds, scillas, narcissus, pulmonarias, grape hyacinths, blue and white striped "Columbine" violas, spurgeons. The big surges such as *Euphorbia wulfenii* are spangled with ladybirds.

But paradoxically, although it is the flowers we talk about, it is the

great swelling mounds of foliage in the garden that make the whole place look rich and furnished again. Particularly vivid and brilliant is the fountain of growth from the giant fennel, *Ferula communis*, a different family of plants from the fennel that you eat, but with the same fine, thread-like foliage.

In good soil, this plant will make a fabulous mound of lacy green three or four feet across, and perhaps two feet high. Then when it feels it has built up enough of a foundation, it sends up a huge flowering stem, topped by flat heads of yellow flowers. But the leaves are its chief glory, though leaf sounds too meaty, too hunk-a-term for this fine spun wirework. Next to it are the spear leaves of a tall white-flowered iris, Iris orientalis and a mound of brunnera covered now with forget-me-not flowers.

Iris leaves, that is the tall spear-like kind that go with bearded irises such as *I. orientalis*, *I. sibirica* and *I. monspur* are very useful at this time of the year, acting like exclamation marks among low mounds of geranium leaves or thalictrums just heaving themselves up into action. You couldn't be headed iris like this. They would resent having their rhizomes covered or shaded by vigorous neighbours. But *I. orientalis* seems to grow anywhere in sun or shade, the leaves eventually reaching three feet in height.

There is new giant cow parsley (*Selinum tenuifolium*) on the bank, too, not such a hypnotically vivid green as the giant fennel, nor as finely cut in its foliage. But one of

Bowles, who as a writer never wants to leave you in any doubt as to his opinions, also called *Selinum tenuifolium* "the most beautiful of fern-leaved plants". Not at the moment, it's not. The laurels go to sweet cicely, *Myrrhis odorata*. That is because it is one of the few of the fern-leaved umbellifer tribe to get its act together this early in the year. The foliage is a wonderfully fresh green, and it is already in full flower, heads of greenish, greyish white, not showy, but quite sweet-smelling. Does the plant get its "odorata" tag from the flowers? Or from the leaves, which smell of aniseed?

It grows in deep shade in our garden, partnered by the hefty spotted

leaves of pulmonaria and the shiny strap foliage of hart's tongue ferns. Gerard, one of the early herbalists, said that to eat it was "exceeding good, holmose and pleasant among other salade herbs", but perhaps they were keener then on the taste of aniseed than we are now. In the north country, the plant was once used as a polish, rubbed into oak paneling and buffed up to a shine when the juice had dried off.

Sweet cicely is a compact plant, no more than two feet high and wide. You wouldn't want it in a starring role, but it is usefully early and unfussy about shade. It makes a good backdrop for low mats of

*Primula vulgaris sibirica* which are flowering now, short-stemmed mauve flowers, each with a yellow eye. It doesn't seed around like the common primrose, but the clumps are easy to split up, once flowering is over.

Variety in form is perhaps the first thing you notice in contrasts of foliage plants: upright iris sword leaves against chunky brunnera leaves, lacy sweet cicely against the common pulmonaria, but there are other contrasts to bear in mind too, contrasts of texture, of colour, of variegation, of habit.

The drooping quality of the alliums' leaves, growing first up, then

turning over on themselves so that their tips touch the ground, is a distinct landmark among the determinedly upright spears of peony foliage, pushing through the ground now with knobby flower buds firmly and bossily in place on top. And the peonies' leaves themselves, with their strange bronzed finish, make a good foil for the tulips.

Although you do not think of either alliums or peonies as being primarily foliage plants, they are both positive assets at the moment. Their real moment of glory will come later when they flower. But how many plants is the garden carrying that contribute very little outside their flowering period? I have already started sniffing around nurseries for new plants to fill in some holes. Each time I look at a possible candidate I ask it "So what do you look like when you are not at your best?" How fortunate I don't have to answer the same question.

Giant fennel and the giant cow parsley, *Selinum tenuifolium*, can be got from Tim Ingram, Copton Ash, 105 Ashford Rd, Faversham, Kent ME13 8XW (01795 535919). The nursery is open Tues-Thurs and Sat-Sun (2-6pm). Plants can be sent by mail order. Send four first class stamps for a catalogue.



Giant fennel: the heads of yellow flowers may be impressive, but the leaves are its chief glory

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## gardening

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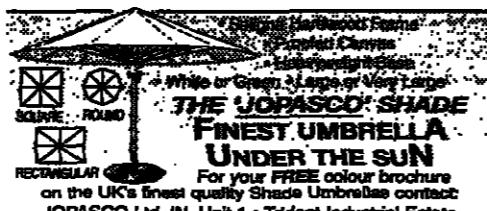
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Anna McKane offers some friendly advice

Y our small crop is not likely to damage the Windward Islands' economy in the near future, but one's own bunch of bananas is the latest trend among conservatory owners as growers search for ever-more exotic plants to grow.

I have just been given a banana plant, an offset from a parent plant which produced a cluster of bananas last summer in a small suburban conservatory. My plant, which is about 18 inches high, is *Musa acuminata* 'Dwarf Cavendish', a smaller relative of the banana grown commercially in the West Indies.

It is the most common variety for those who are hoping for edible fruit, although it is grown first and foremost for its leaves. They are huge, more than two feet long and a foot wide when the plant is established. Each leaf appears tightly rolled at the growing point, and then opens and flops outwards, so as the plant gets bigger it has a very jungly look.

This is added to by the offsets which will appear around the main stem if the plant is happy. The leaves are very striking but not very tough – if brushed against they may tear or

become damaged. They may also become scruffy if the plant suffers in any other way, either through cold or through inadequate watering. But with plenty of food and light, the leaves grow fast and so big that they have a very dramatic effect in summer.

'Dwarf Cavendish' will need to be six or seven feet high before it will fruit. Bananas grow very quickly so I may get fruit this year, but next year is probably more realistic. It needs a minimum temperature of 10°C (50°F) in the winter to be happy, although it may survive a slightly colder snap. It will need much more heat, and some – but not full – sunshine in the summer if it is to fruit.

Richard Beale, nursery manager of Scarlett's Quality Plants near Colchester, which specialises in conservatory plants, says bananas should be grown in a peat- or coir-based compost, as loam would be too heavy. He recommends very generous feeding to get the dramatic, large leaves. The plants should be potted up with a slow-release fertiliser, but then fed regularly with a weak low-nitrogen fertiliser. Another grower even suggested feeding every other day during

the summer when the plant is growing fast.

Scarlett's new mail-order business, Conservatory PlantLine, offers *Musa basjoo*, also known as the Japanese banana, which is even harder than 'Dwarf Cavendish'. In mild districts it will survive outside if wrapped during the coldest weather in sacking or some other protective material. But there seems to be a rather bigger question mark over *M basjoo*'s ability to produce

Having acquired my banana plant I am wondering now about a tropical fruit salad. Grapes, of course, can be grown in this country. And so can oranges and tangerines. But if you want to eat them, take care to avoid the conservatory citrus called 'calamondin'. If I get any bananas I might make a West Indian hot fruit salad: bananas, white peaches, dark sticky Barbados sugar and rum in hot oven for 20 minutes to give a tropical flavour to fruit which will have seen only the northern sun.

Scarlett's Quality Plants 01206 240466. Conservatory PlantLine 01206 242533

Sarah Raven, author of *The Cutting Garden* (Frances Lincoln, £25) is holding a series of courses this spring and summer at her home in East Sussex, where she has made two cutting gardens, packed with flowers for picking. For those with no gardening experience, there is a two-day course (21-22 April) on making a cutting garden, which covers all aspects of the subject: design, structure, plant selection, maintenance and harvesting. Another two-day course for beginners is planned for 12-13 May. The subject is "Do your own party or wedding" with the emphasis on fast-growing flowers, that will be ready to pick within three months of



#### CUTTINGS

sowing or planting. Call 01424 838181 for more information on the courses, held at The Oast, Perch Hill Farm, Brightling, Robertsbridge, E Sussex TN32 5H.

The Seventh International Heritage Rose Conference will be held at Cambridge this summer from 29 June to 4 July. The conference is aimed at those who love old

roses and enthusiasts from all over the world will speak. David Ruston from Australia will talk about roses in 17th- and 18th-century flower paintings. William Grant from the US is lecturing on species roses as garden plants. Included in the conference are a series of tours: the grower Peter Beales' display gardens in Norfolk, David Austin's English roses in Wolverhampton and the collection of old roses at Chilham Hall near Canterbury are all on the itinerary. Contact Peter Beales, London Rd, Atteborough, Norfolk NR17 1AY (01953 454707).

The National Trust plans a massive series of spring

plant fairs at various NT properties on Sunday 18 May. About 50 are planned that day across England and Wales. Wallington in Northumberland is taking part. So is Canons Ashby in Northamptonshire and Petworth in Sussex. The trust is appealing for plants to sell at the fairs so if you have spares bear them in mind. The trust hopes to raise £100,000 from its fair day to spend on urgent garden conservation work. Get a Spring Plant Fair Day information pack by phoning 0181-315 1111 or writing (with a stamped, addressed envelope) to The National Trust Spring Plant Fair Day, PO Box 39, Bromley, Kent BR1 3XL.

# all consuming

## A buyers' guide to running away

**T**oday, 27,000 of the 70,000 runners who applied to run tomorrow's London Marathon are in the final throes of preparation. They will not be out buying a last-minute pair of running shoes, or purchasing T-shirts and shorts. New clothes are a big no-no when running 26 miles and 385 yards is on the agenda. Far more likely are checks on their supply of Vaseline (all runners grease up before a big run) and ensuring a plaster or two is available to prevent the dreaded joggers' nipple.

Bill Adcocks, a former Olympic marathon runner, now works at the British Athletic Federation dispensing advice. He says: "Never, ever, wear new kit on the marathon. On the day, the clothes you wear are as important as the level of fitness achieved." Key advice from the Federation is to expose as much skin as possible when running so that sweat can evaporate easily. For men that means mesh vests and loose shorts, and for women little supportive crop-tops and gym-knicker style shorts. Wearing cotton sportswear is not advised: the fibres become weighed down with sweat and hinder the runner. Nylon, polyester or the specially patented CoolMax by DuPont and Dri-Fit by Nike are recommended instead. One can only pity the hundreds of participants swathed in pink elephant, clown or chicken outfits (not to mention their wife's cami-knickers and suspenders) running back-wards while juggling six balls and breathing fire.

Melanie Rickey

PHOTOGRAPHER: TONY BUCKINGHAM; STYLIST: BOBBY DAVIES

Vaseline petroleum jelly, £1.19, by Boots, branches nationwide. "You wouldn't think of starting a car without oil, so no marathon runner should start up without grease," says Adcocks

Blist protection kit, £3.19, by Boots. Can be applied before a big run to prevent blisters developing, or to cure them when they do. Available from Boots stores nationwide

Blue and orange ladies 'Salvation' running shoes or 'Feel You Wear', £89.99, by Adidas, available from Cobra Sports, JD Sports, Sports Division and specialist retailers nationwide. The shoe is designed to emulate the way the foot works. There is traction and cushioning on the shoe in the same places as the foot, and rounded edges, instead of square ones - this is a high performance shoe for athletes

"Whatever you do, don't describe my designs as patchwork," says Lauren Shanley, in her shop at Gabriel's Wharf, amidst the most extravagant fabrics seen this side of Japan. "Patchwork" is not a word that you would associate with these fluent, luminescent outfits, which swath a growing number of Londoners. As well as clothes, the shop is crammed with bags, jewellery, mirrors and hats made from scraps of recycled materials and Quality Street wrappers. The unmistakable feel of the subcontinent comes from her many trips to south-east Asia and India.

Between towering piles of fabric, Lauren sits at her sewing machine, resplendent in a jacket she has created from tangerine curtain material. Behind her hangs a collaged and appliquéd mirage, tiny angel faces peeking from behind silver embroidery. It is a coat. These brilliant three-dimensional works of art are conjured from bags of jumble and scraps of ancient fabric.

I once found a huge bag of linen and lace hankies at a jumble sale and made someone's wedding dress from them. It was probably an old lady's lifetime collection," she says. "The dress was very full and layered, and I embroidered it with silver thread."

She recently made a dress with a purple-and-green cape for a society wedding at the Dorchester. "I sometimes make the groom's clothes, too," she says, nodding towards a glorious waistcoat with a collage guitar surreptitiously sliding over the shoulder.

As the sign on the shop window says, Lauren is "committed to recycling". She creates most of her fabrics by transforming donated velvets, chiffons and Fibres curtains in the four steps to uniqueness. She starts with rectangular panels of materials which she collages, embroiders and appliqués, finishing the elaborate process with gold or silver threads. Most of her

commissioned work is made from these recycled materials. Customers, or "well-wishers", donate their satin and brocade curtains or bags of jumble. An Irish lady once sent a packet of original multi-coloured Twenties chiffon scarves. The friendly atmosphere of the shop and its Aladdin-ish feel encourage people to stay and chat - often for hours. Lauren has discovered that many of her customers buy her clothes when they want to change their lives. "Colour is energy," she explains, "and it's so grey out there."

She waves towards the filthy Thames. "Colour allows us to make a strong statement about ourselves and fight against a society that tries to push us into all being the same. There is a definite body politic in my work. I'm into things being comfortable, so they're often soft and drapy. I've often asked to make things for people who have difficulty getting what they want in standard shops."



Vaseline petroleum jelly, £1.19, by Boots, branches nationwide. "You wouldn't think of starting a car without oil, so no marathon runner should start up without grease," says Adcocks

High energy sports bars, from £1, from Runners Need (see below)

Polar heart rate monitor, £99.99, from Runners Need, 34 Parkway, London NW1, 0171-267 7525. The shop has everything from high energy drinks to a service that analyses the wear patterns of your sports shoes. This watch monitors your heart-rate, has a stop-watch and also lets you know when you should pace yourself - particularly useful for marathon running

Ladies red running top with built-in sports bra, £19.99, by Saucony (the American Indian word for running), and ladies blue running shorts, £19.99, by Saucony. Both items are made from breathable fabrics and are designed for maximum support and ease of movement, from Runners Need, as before

Contoured shock absorbing insoles, £13.99, by Soborthane. These insoles are recommended by physiotherapists, and are excellent for taking the strain of the run. Available from Runners Need (see above)

Red cotton vest, £15.99; navy cotton shorts, £22.99 - both by Russell Athletic. From Lillywhites branches nationwide (01506 439431). Cotton is good and comfortable for short runs. It soaks up moisture but doesn't disperse it, so the fabric begins to chaff and rub on an extended run

Bottle green men's running trainers DMX 2000, £110, by Reebok. This shoe has a dual element airflow system, and "sensational" cushioning according to the blurb, which basically means the runner experiences none of the typical jarring impact associated with running. From JD Sports, Sports Division, Cobra Sports and specialist retailers nationwide. Inquiries 01524 580100

## Hearts on sleeves to save the world

Lauren Shanley's exquisite, increasingly sought-after garments are made from recycled fabrics and other bits of jumble. Shan Senofield reports



Lauren Shanley: 'I found a huge bag of linen and lace hankies at a jumble sale and made someone's wedding dress'

JASON BYE

Her customers range from teenagers to much older women, from students to lecturers, from pregnant brides to radical feminists. They are all people who want styles that can't be dated, and look better with age. "The clothes look better after people have sweated in them and made them lumpy. They become heirlooms."

As an artist in her native New Zealand, Lauren was always environmentally aware, and particularly interested in recycling. She collected and dyed rope and other organic rubbish from the beach, and later made wall hangings and soft sculptures which gradually evolved into clothes. She passes on her recycling philosophy by giving lectures and exhibitions, and doing workshops with school children.

Lauren's belief in the importance of recycling is part of a growing awareness about our responsibility to the environment. Rob Harrison, for one, is pleased to see

designers such as Lauren Shanley reusing fabrics. As a spokesperson for *The Ethical Consumer*, a Manchester-based magazine, Rob shares Lauren's concern about the effects that clothes production have on the earth.

"It is a worldwide problem, having a massive impact on such things as water pollution from the bleaching and dyeing, land use for cotton instead of food crops, and pesticide poisoning."

He produces a litany of ecological evils. Cotton plants alone, for example, use up 25 per cent of world sales of pesticides; nylon production may account for half the emission of the greenhouse gas nitrous oxide in the UK. Heavy metals such as lead and titanium, used to fix colours, are toxic; some dyes are thought to be carcinogenic; and sheep-dips for wool may be poisoning our farmers.

Those of us who are not thrilled at the thought of noble nudity, however, may rest in the con-

cernery makers and artists, including some particularly disturbing but enchanting brooches in the shape of cartoon girls.

Always an artist, Lauren doesn't like the idea of anyone else creating her fabrics or clothes. Each garment has her individuality and philosophy sewn into it. To relinquish this sense of ownership would endanger the idea of what a Lauren Shanley piece is. Because of this, there is a waiting-list for commissioned clothes, which can take anything from a couple of weeks to several months to make.

Lauren Shanley can be contacted Tuesday to Saturday, 11am to 6pm (0171-928 5782). An exhibition of her work will be held on 28 April. It is called 'Doris Day goes to India' and will be held at The Inner Space, Whitechapel Pottery, London E1, from 7pm. Tickets £10, (includes food and drink) can be ordered in advance.

# Do your trousers suit you, sir?

A Savile Row expert gives Andy Zneimer the lowdown on that most famous of readymades – blue jeans

**D**o designer labels for jeans come attached to anything out of the ordinary or are we better off buying numerous pairs of Burton's Nico jeans for the price of one pair from Katharine Hamnett or Versace? I, for one, would hate to think of myself as being gullible.

To help me sift the wheat from the chaff, I went along to Norton & Sons Ltd of 16 Savile Row, bespoke and specialist field sports tailors since 1821, and asked gentleman and expert tailor (coats, cutter and fitter) Mr Ritchie Charlton, 32, to assess the basic jeans from some 14 different manufacturers. Here are his thoughts.

We looked first at the designer labels. The Versace specimen fared pretty well but, crucially, Mr Charlton pointed out that, "this is not a jeans as we know it. It's rather a flat-front trouser with very little seam detail." Although the fabric quality was very good, there was little in the styling to indicate this was a pair of denim trousers. It had a bold turn-up, a narrow leg, a light blue hue and excellent pocket bag construction, an indicator of durability. All in all, a good-quality trouser.

The offering from D&G was less well received. Mr Charlton pointed out that the jeans looked clumsy and when I tried them on I found them incredibly uncomfortable. They are cut like a hipster in the front only, have a ridiculously tiny fly, and are a real throwback to the 1970s, with a straight leg and

orange stitching on a light blue denim. On the plus side, the fabric quality was on a par with the likes of a Wrangler or Lee. Mr Charlton's verdict, as he tugged at my waistband: "For fashion victims only."

By far the best of the designer jeans was the Katharine Hamnett "Cato" (from £75). This jeans was of a high-quality cloth with strong pocket bags. The denim had a unique sheen to it and a slightly stretchy feel (a result of the viscose, rayon and cotton mix). The waistband was lined with the same material as the pocket bags but wasn't of double denim and therefore could be prone to over-stretching. Overall, Mr Charlton felt this to be a tasteful garment, well constructed, of some quality but perhaps for occasional rather than everyday wear.

The Falmer "Comfort 70", (prices from £30 with stretch, ring spun and others from £34 plus), was a nice quality heavy jeans with a good, clean finish and no scruffiness. However, Mr Charlton pointed out that the pocket bags were unforunately cut on the bias, almost certainly to save cloth and money. This meant that they would lose shape quickly and you could see that the stitching was very weak. The jeans was short on the rise, giving a vaguely hipster effect in the front. The pocket detail and shape was quite similar to classic Levi's. All in all, just about reasonable value for money.



The crotch of the matter: Savile Row tailor Ritchie Charlton assesses how today's denims measure up. Right, Paul Smith jeans

Easy sent in the straight-legged "Marvin" button jean (prices from £25 to £32), Mr Charlton's first comment was that he didn't like or see the point of the pre-worn effect on the front and back. The pocket bags were deemed passable and the fabric quality pretty good. "Bog standard, a bit nothing in terms of style," was the conclusion.

Lee sent in the "Brooklyn" stonewash model (from £31.99) and Wrangler, the "Texas", (£34.99). Mr Charlton thought them both to be of a high-quality fabric and construction, with a good, clean finish. All in all, excellent products in terms of value for money (particularly when compared with the likes of CK,

which Mr Charlton described as, "Standard fare. One is paying for the brand name.") The above-average number of loopholes for a belt on the Wranglers were noted as a distinctive positive point, as were the quite uniquely curved rear pockets of the Lee's.

The Joe Bloggs Regular JBJ (at £29.99) possessed not very flattering low pockets. The yoke seam was deeper than on the more classic jeans. The fabric was of a good, very strong denim, top-stitched on the inside leg. Perhaps lacking slightly in style, thought Mr Charlton.

However, I liked their look and felt comfortable in them. The pocket bags were judgement-free of reasonable quality. "Excellent,"

value for money," signed Mr Charlton, almost jeaned out.

On we pressed. The Marks & Spencer range (from £22 to £30 for stretch with lycra) was of decent quality and good value for money, although the waistband was cut across the piece and not cut down on the stretch Premium Label jeans, probably for economic reasons, surmised Mr Charlton, somewhat disappointed. Other bad points were the slightly untidy finish and oddly sub-standard pocket bag quality, although the Classic Label jeans fared better.

The Nico jeans from Burton was well-finished and, for £20, judged good value for money. It was made of a good quality cloth, had a tidy

finish and strong stitching, although again the pocket bags were not on a par with the rest of the jeans.

Finally, we came to the best three jeans of the lot. In third place was Pepe's Denim Deluxe, (from £52.99 to £75). "There has been no expense spared here," reported Mr Charlton. This jeans has been cut for quality and is of a rugged yet comfortable fabric. Style-wise, the Deluxe has that slightly baggy Casey Jones look as well as novel hollowed-out buttons. Mr Charlton thought it to be a fine all-round jeans.

The Diesel Kefet (from £55) is made of an excellent quality cloth. Even before you put it on, this jeans looks like it's going to be stylish and



MAIN PHOTOGRAPH: NICOLA KURTZ

comfortable. The dark Indigo blue is a very pleasing colour. Mr Charlton thought it would wash to be a jeans that you would become very attached to.

The Levi 501 (approximately £56) was Mr Charlton's choice for the best jeans and I have to agree with him. His thoughts: "The best by far. There is always a nice tidy finish to the jeans. The fabric is of a very high quality, tighter and more robust than its competitors. They are built to last. The pocket bags are well-constructed and strong. I like the look of a pair of Levi's. A Levi Strauss jeans remains the benchmark."

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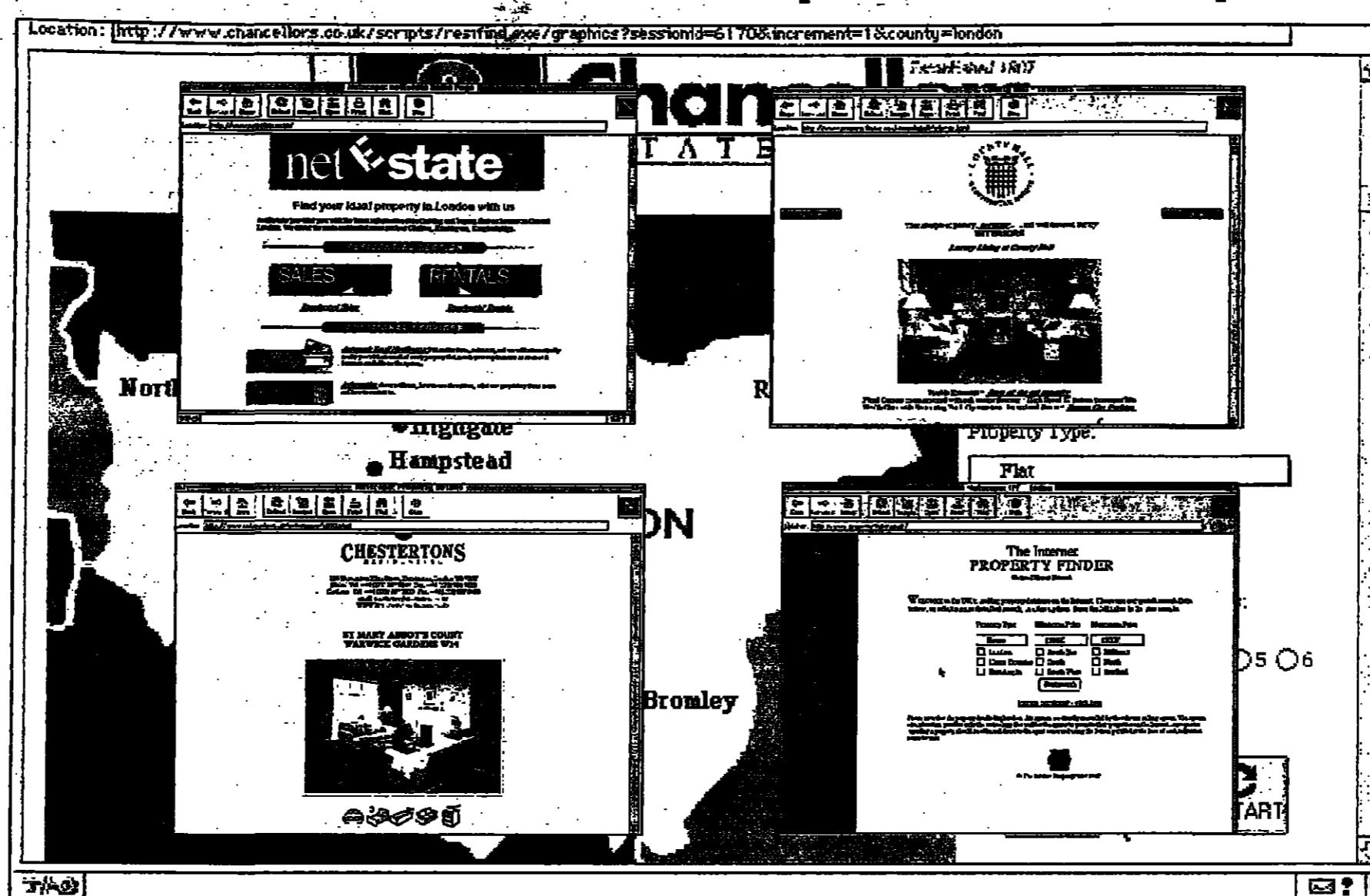
In theory the Internet could completely change the way we buy and sell houses. But how effective is it today, asks David Bowen

**H**eard the one about the man who spent £1m on a house without ever seeing it? Well, it's true. Thanks to the Internet it is possible to find a house, examine it, put in an offer and exchange the documentation – all without stirring from a chair on the other side of the world.

The property world swirls with stories of such "cybersales" – and a handful have indeed been completed (mostly by wealthy Asians buying in central London). According to Peter Callaghan of Prestige Properties International, his Internet site has led to a Canadian finding a £1m property in Britain, a German buying a house near Cork, and a Yorkshireman finding a place in the Scillies. In each case the buyer came and saw before he bought – but the initial contact was in cyberspace.

A few deals do not make a trend, however. The question the property world is asking is whether the Internet will transform the way houses are bought and sold *en masse*. In theory, it could. The World Wide Web – the graphical part of the Internet – is like an enormous estate agent's window: anyone with a computer and a telephone line can dial into it, look for suitable properties and examine their details.

With the increasing sophistication of Internet software, it is already possible to display rooms in three dimensions, and even to offer a "virtual tour" of a property. Add to this e-mail (the bit of the Internet that carries messages) and you



Web sites may have become an important part of some estate agents' businesses, but as yet only a small percentage of the British population uses the internet

have a mechanism that covers the entire purchase process.

"I think it will change the nature of our business," says David Taylor, director of Chestertons Residential. "If you had a choice of walking around 15 estate agents or looking at all the properties from your home, which would you choose?"

Buyers would still want to talk to people on the ground, but, he points out, such assistance need not be located in expensive High Street offices.

The same argument can be applied to other intermediaries – travel agents, retailers, banks. And

it is the experience of bank (where tens of thousands of jobs have already been lost to technology) that has persuaded many estate agents that they cannot rest on their commissions. A few dozen have their own Web sites, while others have put properties on sites that group several portfolios together.

It is early days. Only a small percentage of the British population

has ever used the Internet, and few of the sites yet have the critical mass to make much difference to the way houses are bought and sold. One that does belongs to Chancellsors, an Ascot-based group with offices

along the hi-tech M4 corridor. Ian Simpson, a director, says that the Internet has already become "an inherent part of our business". When Chancellsors attributed its first sale to the site last autumn, it issued an excited press release. Now, he says, "we've stopped monitoring it – we have instructions and introductions coming in all the time."

Chancellsors has a system that automatically puts every property for which the company get instructions on to the Web site ([www.chancellsors.co.uk](http://www.chancellsors.co.uk)). "If you say you want to sell your property today, it will

be displayed on the Internet at 8am tomorrow," Mr Simpson says.

Though the group has several thousand properties on its site, it has also started a site called Homefile ([www.homefile.co.uk](http://www.homefile.co.uk)), which includes houses offered by agents in other areas. It will thus be going head to head with a number of specialist sites, all trying to become the place where potential buyers look for their new homes.

The point is that the World Wide Web is a big and unruly place. It has tens of millions of sites on it, but only a few hundred get more than a thousand or so visitors. To make

an electronic property operation work effectively, it must be easy to find, and offer the buyer the same sort of choice as he would get in the High Street. One mega-site might not be healthy, because there would be no competition. But if, say, there were two or three well-known ones, each with tens of thousands of properties, the Web really would be a viable alternative to those Saturday morning jaunts.

Right now, a number of sites are jockeying to belong to that profitable elite. Two front-runners, Net Estate ([www.netestate.dares.com](http://www.netestate.dares.com)) and InternetProperty Finder ([www.ipf.co.uk](http://www.ipf.co.uk))

are battling for the loyalty of the big national agents. IPF has Savills, John D Wood, Knight Frank, Strutt & Parker, Humberts, and Cluttons, while Net Estate has Chestertons and is expected to sign up Hampsons and Foxtons. All these agents have been testing the sites out with a limited number of properties displayed – but are now moving to full-scale commitment.

These sites have a distinctly upmarket flavour. That is unsurprising, not only because the Internet is still mainly the preserve of AB types, but also because it overcomes distance. Prestige Properties International ([www.zonet.co.uk](http://www.zonet.co.uk)) specialises in selling UK properties to foreigners, while all the big estate agents report a high proportion of enquiries coming from abroad – particularly from Asia.

Will the Internet ever cut the ground from beneath estate agents' feet? PPI collects and advertises properties directly – and users avoid paying those annoyingly chunky commissions. The agents hope that by joining the revolution they will not be swept away by it, and it will certainly be a while before most of us turn to the Internet for our next house. The trouble is, "a while" in the fast-forward Internet world, could mean no more than a couple of years.

David Bowen edits Net Profit, a non-technical newsletter on the business uses of the Internet (for more information call 0181-353 6836; E-mail [info@net-profit.co.uk](mailto:info@net-profit.co.uk))

## Crack and ruin

**A** couple of cracks in the wall and a jammed sash window can drive even the calmest householder to search through the small print of his insurance policy. Subsidence is the stuff that nightmares are made of, raising spectres of huge bills, underpinning, even total collapse.

Properties at risk are those built on shrinkable clay soil, most of which lies south of a line between Hull and Exeter. In normal weather, houses move slightly as the soil dries out towards the end of the summer and swells again with winter rain. But two unusually dry years have sent the cost of insurance claims for subsidence damage soaring, from £125m in 1994 to £331m in 1996. This year's combination of dry weather plus more properties being surveyed in an active market is likely to result in even higher claims.

But while home-owners lie awake at night listening for every creak and fearing the worst, experts are reassuring. "Almost any building on clay soil moves up and down between summer and winter," says Mike Crilly, project manager at the Building Research Establishment. "People panic when they see a crack, which is understandable, but almost all buildings crack for some reason during their lifetime. Subsidence damage shouldn't be that serious. Your house is not going to fall down. Generally its performance is hardly impaired and the damage is purely aesthetic."

Properties most susceptible are neither the oldest nor the newest, but those built between the Forties and about 1970. "Building materials were more inflexible than before, but foundations were not up to today's standards." Anyone buying a Victorian or Edwardian house can expect to live with a few cracks, many of which will appear in summer and disappear in winter.

The BRE has drawn up a classification of subsidence damage with recommendations for action. These are set out in a useful layman's guide, *Has Your House Got Cracks?* by TJ Freeman, GS Littlejohn and RMC Driscoll (published with The Institution of Civil Engineers, price £9.95). Category 0 means hairline cracks causing cosmetic damage only. If you are unfortunate enough to have cracks wider than 25mm, or the walls lean badly, the windows, door and roof timbers lose their bearing, your house is in category 5 and may even fall down.

Category 2 signals the time to take action. This is when you have several

As concerns grow over droughts, Stella Bingham examines the resulting problems of subsidence

cracks at least 3mm wide, possibly on the inside only, that do not close up in winter. The solution for this fairly minor damage could be as simple as pruning or removing thirsty trees. Trees are at least partly responsible for about 80 per cent of all clay soil subsidence claims. No tree should be planted nearer than 5m to a house, and willows should be at least 40m away. But pause before you reach for the axe. Removing trees may cause more problems than it solves.

"Properties on clay soils can suffer from opposite and equal perils," says Mr Crilly. "You may have heave when you remove a tree because the ground swells as it takes up water. In general, it is fine to remove trees if they are not older than the property, because the house simply goes back to where it was before the tree was planted. If the tree is older than the house, seek specialist advice."

Underpinning is very much the last resort these days. "Householders do not appreciate how much of a disruption and how expensive underpinning is ... and insurers are reluctant to sanction it for most properties."

The bill for underpinning a semi could run to £20,000. Even if you are covered by insurance, you will probably have to pay the first £1,500, and your house may be uninhabitable while the work is being carried out.

Home-owners in subsidence high-risk areas may also have to pay higher premiums, and properties with a history of subsidence can be hard to insure. "There is a very real subsidence threat once properties have had to be underpinned," says Chris Jordan, head of insurance at the Berthill-based Subsidence Claims Advisory Bureau. "A lot of insurance companies run a mile when asked to cover a property that has suffered from subsidence." The Bureau has set up its own insurance scheme. Previously Underpinning Properties, or PUP, for such blighted houses.



Homes on shrinkable clay soil are most at risk from subsidence EDWARD WEBB

Subsidence damage can also be a problem when you want to sell. Mortgage lenders may be reluctant to lend on affected buildings. The Halifax, for example, will consider properties with a history of subsidence if there has been no recent movement, or if a structural engineer certifies that underpinning has done its job. Where the valuer suspects subsidence is ongoing, they will consider lending only if the house

is insurable. All of which may sound depressing, but Mike Crilly remains upbeat.

"Climatic conditions are ideal for causing greater amounts of subsidence damage in the long term ... and you can't understand the entire country."

"Learn to live with your cracks, as people in the period pre-insurance did. It's probably not as bad as you think."

"Our normal strategy is to go to market with a full marketing package," says Sue Parry, of Cala Midlands. "But at the end of last year people started phoning and demanding to buy from the plans."

plan," she adds. "You have to be precise about what you are offering in terms of specifications."

"People who buy off-plan live and breathe their purchases," says Linden Homes' Andrea Powell. "They visit other developments, making scale drawings, fitting in their own furnishings, wondering whether to make little Johnny's bedroom bigger. They often photograph the plot every week."

That was the sort of research that faced Malcolm and Helen Howard when they decided to buy a house at Fairclough Homes' site at Kingston Bagpuize, near Oxford. "We liked the look of the estate but there wasn't a show home and it was hard to visualise what the house would look like," says Helen. The Howards checked the specifications of a larger show home on a different site and measured their furniture. Finally Malcolm plotted everything on graph paper.

Satisfied, the Howards found a buyer for their old house and put down a deposit at the end of March. They expect to exchange contracts on 2 May and to move in at the end of July. "It's exciting now. The outside walls are up to head height."

Buyers off-plan generally have to exchange contracts and pay 10 per cent of the purchase price four weeks after reserving their plot. At that stage they are given the probable month for completion, but will know their moving day only three or four weeks ahead.

And some developers still believe that the disadvantages of selling off-plan outweigh the advantages. "We advocate opening a show home and letting the customer see what we are doing before we take sales," says Rameen Firoozan, of Laing. "That way we avoid the misunderstandings that can arise if you sell from a brochure, however careful you are."

## Pick your plot and watch it grow

Buying off-plan, before a brick is laid, has big benefits, reports Stella Bingham

**L**ast December, Paul Freeman put a deposit on a penthouse flat at Fairclough's Rainbow Quay in London's Docklands. He expects to move in before next Christmas. Paul, 25, an IT specialist, bought his new home before a brick had been laid.

"Because I got in early, I got the flat I wanted. I got a discount and I've got a year to save. I'm renting at the moment, and all I own is two sofas and a toothbrush."

When Paul paid his deposit there wasn't even a show flat to help him visualise his future home. He had an idea of the general layout and finish from another Fairclough site, and I was happy with that. The plans were vague to start with but pretty detailed by the time we exchanged contracts. Then I had a computer package done so that I could walk round the flat. Because I bought off-plan, I could make changes to the layout. I've reduced the size of the walk-in wardrobe and made the en suite bathroom bigger."

Discounts are no longer available and asking prices have already gone up at Rainbow Quay, so Paul is happy with his deal. "My advice to anyone buying off-plan is to make sure they like the area, look at somewhere else the developer has built – and be patient."

Buying a house from the builder's plans takes nerve and imagination, but it may be the only way to get the property you want. "It's a builder's market now," says Ian Hughes, of Fairclough Homes. The development of 27 houses at St Albans sold out in two-and-a-half months, before they had had a chance to open a show house.

"Our normal strategy is to go to market with a full marketing package," says Sue Parry, of Cala Midlands. "But at the end of last year people started phoning and demanding to buy from the plans."

"It is harder work to sell off-

## Three on view Waterside homes



Ashford House at Shurton, nine miles from Bridgwater in Somerset, is reached by driving through a ford, three times. Visitors on foot don't have to wear wellies: there is a stone pedestrian bridge leading to the gardens. The three-bedroom, three-bathroom converted barn lies between the Bristol Channel and the Quantock hills. The gardens are mainly walled and have the brook running along the bottom. £142,750 through Greenslade Hunt (01278 425555).



Siesta Quay must be the most expensive house on Poole Harbour. The lemon-painted, five-bedroom, five-bathroom, harbour-front house has a hand-painted kitchen with marble floors, four reception rooms, balconies with views to Brownsea Island and electronic security gates. It is being sold fully furnished for £900,000 through Lloyds (01202 708044).



Waterside Cottage, in North Wimborne, Hampshire, lies next to the Basingstoke Canal and so enjoys frequent visits from ducks and swans. The two-bedroom, end-of-terrace cottage, which is situated a mile from the mainline station at Hook, has lawns leading down to the canal bank; the towpath is on the opposite side of the canal. £105,000 through Hill & Morrison (01256 702892).

# Who's been living in your house?

Find out the history of your property and you're quids in, says Rosalind Russell

**W**hen the present owner of a distinguished 19th-century house in Kensington leaves it for ever, her buyer will be handed a complete history of the property. There were no famous occupants, but – as with the provenance of a classic car – a house history is a valuable aid to selling.

The house in Neville Terrace was home to a succession of solidly middle-class, respectable types: a widow, a wine merchant; a civil engineer; a professor of music; and a colonel who had an illustrious career with the Indian police in the Punjab. It helps that the three-bedroom house, with leaded bow windows and staff flat, is such a substantial affair. Cluttons is asking £985,000 for the freehold. The histories of other homes with a faster turnover – where some tenants may have wished to avoid the official census – are harder to track.

"It helps a great deal to know the history of the property," says Philip Green, of Goldschmidt and Howland. "We have a research department specifically to find out the history before we put a house on the market. An interesting history may encourage more viewers, leading to competitive bidding."

Blue-plaque houses have a slight edge on their neighbours, even though no one may have a clue about the allegedly important former occupant. G&H are currently selling a £1.1m house in Howley Place, London W2, with a blue plaque dedicated to the Indian philosopher Tilak Lokamanya. More famously, the composer Gustav Holst lived in The Manso – then called The Steps – a Grade II\* listed townhouse in Thaxted, Essex. Here he wrote his choral symphony. The four-

bedroom house is on the market through Bruce Munro at £260,000.

Notorious "black plaque" addresses can be no less attractive, says Philip Green cheerfully. "We have sold houses where people have been murdered... one, in fact, where someone was hacked to death in the hall. It's something to talk about at your dinner parties."

But murders are acceptable only if there's been a decent interval between the police moving out and you moving in. Owners who pay to have the history of their homes researched want more for their money than a list of clean-living bankers, barristers and accountants. Adulterers, forgers, embezzlers and bigamists provide richer dinner-party fare.

Which owner of 9 Berkeley Street, Mayfair, could resist dropping in conversation that the house was once lived in by Elizabeth Howard, mistress of Jeni Mason – the jockey who won the first Grand National in 1839 – and later of Louis Napoleon, emperor of France? A flat in Portsea Hall near Hyde Park, on the market through Chestertons at £127,500, may pick up extra viewers because the spy Anthony Blunt lived in the block, and Lord George Brown also had a flat there.

"The past is powerful in us all," says Colin Style, a professional house history researcher. "And people get curious about their homes, once they've moved in." He and his wife O-Lan have spent nine years digging up the secrets of homes from Middlesex to Cornwall. "It can be deadly dull," warns Colin. "You may find generations living serene and harmonious lives with not a hint of vivid drama."

Researchers charge several hundred pounds for a full history. "People

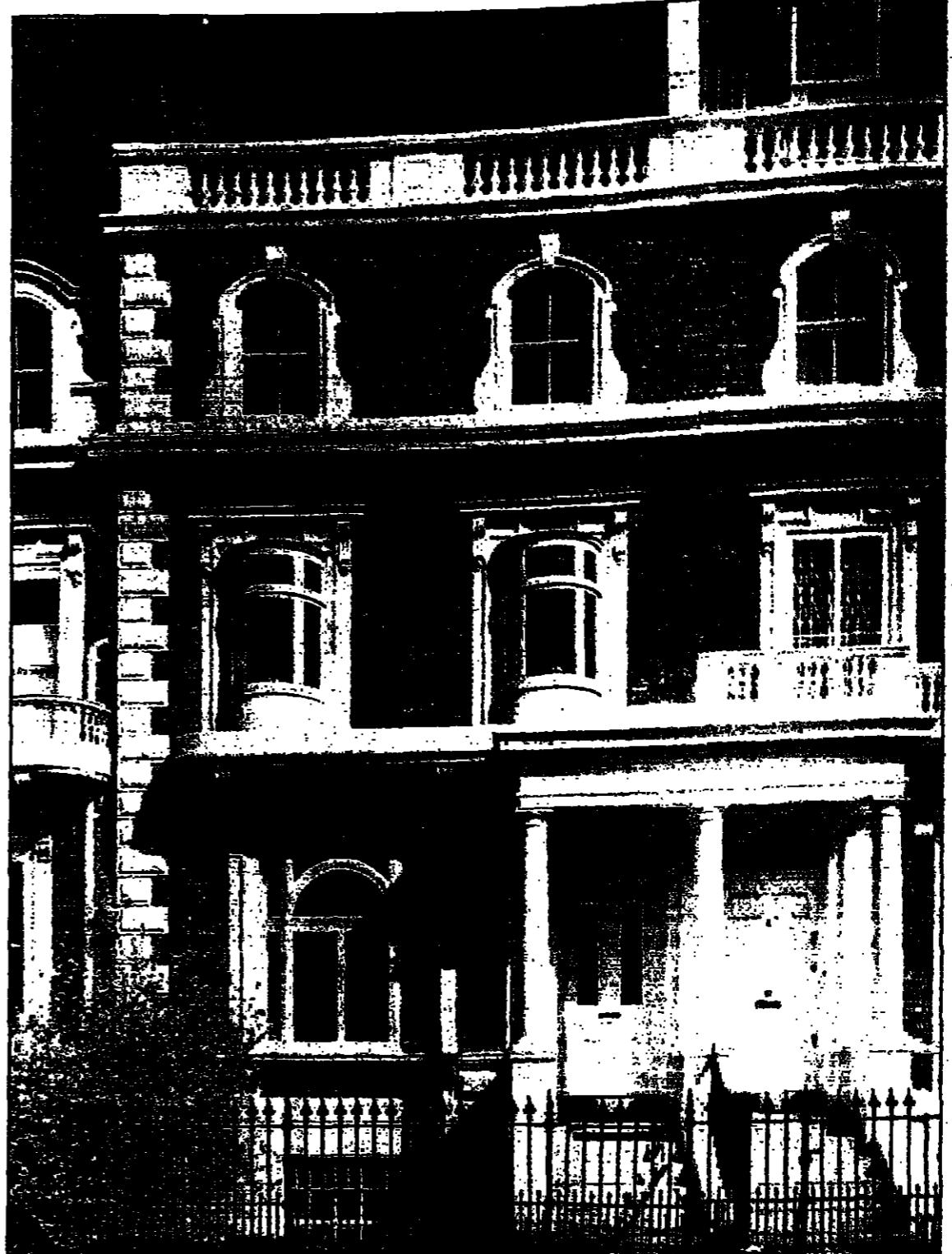
are sometimes surprised at the cost,

but it may take two of us weeks. Imagine what it would cost to have the plumber in that long." You can research the history yourself, but it can be confusing if you don't know where to look. Some parish records are more complete than others, but the census office is a good starting-point. Some Norman, French and medi-

eval Latin could also be useful, suggests Colin, and a good eye for deciphering bad handwriting and erratic spelling. Their own house turned out to hold some unwelcome surprises. "We thought it was Georgian, but then found a map that showed it as a blank space in 1887. In fact it is a Victorian cottage, built in 1902."

And what about worries over for-

mer occupants who won't go away? Ghosts, he says, are out as far as clients are concerned. "People really do not want to know about them. But after we'd had some damp-proofing done in our house, I was standing in the kitchen when I felt a rush of warm air and heard an old lady's voice chattering in my ear. I have to tell you it made my hair stand on end."



Neville Terrace in Kensington: an interesting history attracts viewers

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## Insurers are up for grabs

... but carpetbaggers won't be making a killing this time



Brian Tora

**W**ell, it certainly seems as though the Pru's purchase of Scottish Amicable is focusing interest on mutual insurance companies. The ink was barely dry on my last article when the Australian mutual insurer AMP expressed an interest in the UK mutual company NPI - the one with the squirrel advertisements.

AMP was one of the under-bidders for Scottish Amicable, so it is no surprise to find it is still in the market for a UK acquisition. NPI was swift to deny any interest in being gobbed up by a competitor, but it looks as though the frenetic activity that characterised the restructuring of the building society movement is about to become a feature of the mutual insurance industry.

If there is any surprise, it must be that this has taken so long to come to pass. Several years ago the actuaries Bacon & Woodrow published a report suggesting nearly half of Britain's insurers were too cost inefficient to survive. In a survey of more than 100 companies, only 10 had expenses ratios that would allow them to remain competitive in the new era of full disclosure. As many as 40 were deemed as being unlikely to survive. But so far, only a handful have succumbed to predators.

What the Scottish Amicable deal has exposed is that mutual insurance companies are likely to find it more difficult to reward members through flotation or remaining with the status quo than by allowing themselves to be taken over by a larger competitor. The difference between the amount Scottish Amicable could promise its policyholders through a flotation and the figure they eventually received from the Pru was a factor of over four times. A number of directors of mutual insurance companies will have reflected upon the outcome of this particular tussle and will be rather more coy over promising untold riches through relinquishing mutual status while still remaining independent.

There is an alternative, of course - remain mutual. Building societies that have elected to hold the faith are eating into their profits by paying better rates to savers and charging less for mortgages. The percentage benefit from a takeover or share issue is likely to be relatively small. Still, if you need to take out a life assurance policy, it might be worth checking the performance record of some of the mutual companies.

I shall nurture the insurance policies I have with mutual companies in case I become eligible for an added bonus. Taking out fresh policies in the hope of free shares is hardly a practical option, though. A with-profits endowment policy is a real, long-term commitment - not comparable with placing money with a building society.

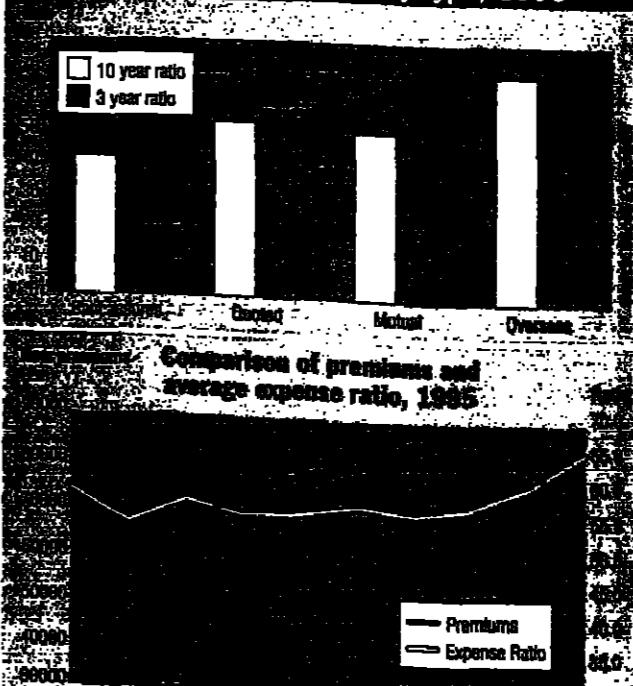
The percentage benefit from a take-over or share issue is likely to be relatively small. Still, if you need to take out a life assurance policy, it might be worth checking the performance record of some of the mutual companies.

Remember, though, that the name "mutual" in a company's title does not necessarily mean it is owned by its policyholders.

Abbey National took over Scottish Mutual some years ago. The name remains though the company is no longer Scottish or Mutual.

**Brian Tora is chairman of the investment strategy committee of the stockbrokers Greig Middleton, and may be contacted on 0171-392-4000.**

Expense ratio by company type, 1995



The three performing funds of each sector highlighted in bold at the top of each section. The two and column following the value for each fund represent the 10-year and 3-year expense ratios respectively. All funds are more than one year old. Fund size is based on the first day of the previous month. The figures are based on Source: FT Information/HSW



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| <b>INVESTMENT</b>   |              |                                |          |  |
|   | Telephone    | APR %                          | Max LTV  | Fixed monthly payments (£3,000 over 3 yrs) |
| <b>UNINSURED</b>  |              |                                |          |  |
| Cheshire Bank   | 0800 240000  | 12.0%                          | —        | With insurance                             |
| Royal B of Scotland   | 0800 221222  | 14.0%                          | —        | Without insurance                          |
| Reflexity BS  | 0800 255100  | 7.4%                           | —        | —  |
| <b>SECURED SECOND CHARGES</b>   |              |                                |          |  |
| Cheshire Bank   | 0800 240000  | 7.8% Max LTV Adm. Term         | £5       | 22%  |
| Royal B of Scotland   | 0800 221222  | 9.0% 70% 3 years to retirement | £5       | 22%  |
| Post Direct   | 0800 000000  | 9.5% 80% 10 yrs to 10 years    | £5       | 22%  |
| <b>INVESTMENT</b>   |              |                                |          |  |
|   | Telephone    | Account                        | 5 yrs    | APR %                                      |
| Woolwich BS   | 0800 488488  | Current                        | 0.0%     | 0.0%                                       |
| Mutual & Leicester  | 0800 355225  | Alliance                       | 0.7%     | 0.5%                                       |
| Bank of Scotland  | 0800 000000  | Direct Debit                   | 11.0%    | —  |
| <b>STANDARD</b>   |              |                                |          |  |
| Cheshire Bank   | 0800 240000  | Advantage Plus                 | 0.0%     | 0.0%                                       |
| RBS Adams   | 0800 077770  | Visa                           | 0.75%    | 0.5%                                       |
| Capital One BS  | 0800 000000  | Visa                           | 0.75%    | 0.5%                                       |
| <b>CARD CHARGES</b>   |              |                                |          |  |
| Cheshire Bank   | 0800 240000  | Visa                           | 0.50%    | 0.25%                                      |
| RBS Adams   | 0800 077770  | Visa                           | 0.50%    | 0.25%                                      |
| Capital One BS  | 0800 000000  | Visa                           | 0.50%    | 0.25%                                      |
| <b>APR. Annualised percentage rate. S+C Buildings and Contents insurance UV Loan to value ASI Accident, sickness and unemployment</b> |              |                                |          |  |
| <b>E Available to comprehensive motor insurance policyholders aged over 22 years.</b>   |              |                                |          |  |
| <b>H Higher rate applies if insurance not arranged</b>  |              |                                |          |  |
| <b>H Introductory rate for a limited period</b>   |              |                                |          |  |
| <b>All rates subject to change without notice. Source: MONEYFACTS 01622 500677 10 April 1997</b>                                      |              |                                |          |  |

## Best savings rates

|                   | Telephone   | Account        | Period  | Rate or term                | Deposit | Rate interest |
|-------------------|-------------|----------------|---------|-----------------------------|---------|---------------|
| Santander BS      | 0800 425000 | Instant Access | Instant | £1                          | 6.75    | Year          |
| Post Direct       | 0800 000000 | Instant Access | Instant | £100                        | 6.75    | Year          |
| Co-operative Bank | 0800 250000 | Save Direct    | Instant | £5,000                      | 6.75    | Year          |
| Post Direct       | 0800 000000 | Instant Access | Instant | £100                        | 6.75    | Year          |
| Barclays BS       | 0800 000000 | Instant Access | Instant | £100                        | 6.75    | Year          |
| Barclays BS       | 0800 000000 | Barclays Gold  | Postal  | £5,000                      | 6.75    | 12 months     |
| Barclays BS       | 0800 000000 | Barclays Gold  | Postal  | £10,000                     | 6.75    | 12 months     |
| Barclays BS       | 0800 000000 | Barclays Gold  | Postal  | £20,000                     | 6.75    | 12 months     |
| Barclays BS       | 0800 000000 | Barclays Gold  | Postal  | £50,000                     | 6.75    | 12 months     |
| Barclays BS       | 0800 000000 | Barclays Gold  | Postal  | £100,000                    | 6.75    | 12 months     |
| Barclays BS       | 0800 000000 | Barclays Gold  | Postal  | £200,000                    | 6.75    | 12 months     |
| Barclays BS       | 0800 000000 | Barclays Gold  | Postal  | £500,000                    | 6.75    | 12 months     |
| Barclays BS       | 0800 000000 | Barclays Gold  | Postal  | £1,000,000                  | 6.75    | 12 months     |
| Barclays BS       | 0800 000000 | Barclays Gold  | Postal  | £2,000,000                  | 6.75    | 12 months     |
| Barclays BS       | 0800 000000 | Barclays Gold  | Postal  | £5,000,000                  | 6.75    | 12 months     |
| Barclays BS       | 0800 000000 | Barclays Gold  | Postal  | £10,000,000                 | 6.75    | 12 months     |
| Barclays BS       | 0800 000000 | Barclays Gold  | Postal  | £20,000,000                 | 6.75    | 12 months     |
| Barclays BS       | 0800 000000 | Barclays Gold  | Postal  | £50,000,000                 | 6.75    | 12 months     |
| Barclays BS       | 0800 000000 | Barclays Gold  | Postal  | £100,000,000                | 6.75    | 12 months     |
| Barclays BS       | 0800 000000 | Barclays Gold  | Postal  | £200,000,000                | 6.75    | 12 months     |
| Barclays BS       | 0800 000000 | Barclays Gold  | Postal  | £500,000,000                | 6.75    | 12 months     |
| Barclays BS       | 0800 000000 | Barclays Gold  | Postal  | £1,000,000,000              | 6.75    | 12 months     |
| Barclays BS       | 0800 000000 | Barclays Gold  | Postal  | £2,000,000,000              | 6.75    | 12 months     |
| Barclays BS       | 0800 000000 | Barclays Gold  | Postal  | £5,000,000,000              | 6.75    | 12 months     |
| Barclays BS       | 0800 000000 | Barclays Gold  | Postal  | £10,000,000,000             | 6.75    | 12 months     |
| Barclays BS       | 0800 000000 | Barclays Gold  | Postal  | £20,000,000,000             | 6.75    | 12 months     |
| Barclays BS       | 0800 000000 | Barclays Gold  | Postal  | £50,000,000,000             | 6.75    | 12 months     |
| Barclays BS       | 0800 000000 | Barclays Gold  | Postal  | £100,000,000,000            | 6.75    | 12 months     |
| Barclays BS       | 0800 000000 | Barclays Gold  | Postal  | £200,000,000,000            | 6.75    | 12 months     |
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| Barclays BS       | 0800 000000 | Barclays Gold  | Postal  | £1,000,000,000,000,000      | 6.75    | 12 months     |
| Barclays BS       | 0800 000000 | Barclays Gold  | Postal  | £2,000,000,000,000,000      | 6.75    | 12 months     |
| Barclays BS       | 0800 000000 | Barclays Gold  | Postal  | £5,000,000,000,000,000      | 6.75    | 12 months     |
| Barclays BS       | 0800 000000 | Barclays Gold  | Postal  | £10,000,000,000,000,000     | 6.75    | 12 months     |
| Barclays BS       | 0800 000000 | Barclays Gold  | Postal  | £20,000,000,000,000,000     | 6.75    | 12 months     |
| Barclays BS       | 0800 000000 | Barclays Gold  | Postal  | £50,000,000,000,000,000     | 6.75    | 12 months     |
| Barclays BS       | 0800 000000 | Barclays Gold  | Postal  | £100,000,000,000,000,000    | 6.75    | 12 months     |
| Barclays BS       | 0800 000000 | Barclays Gold  | Postal  | £200,000,000,000,000,000    | 6.75    | 12 months     |
| Barclays BS       | 0800 000000 | Barclays Gold  | Postal  | £500,000,000,000,000,000    | 6.75    | 12 months     |
| Barclays BS       | 0800 000000 | Barclays Gold  | Postal  | £1,000,000,000,000,000,000  | 6.75    | 12 months     |
| Barclays BS       | 0800 000000 | Barclays Gold  | Postal  | £2,000,000,000,000,000,000  | 6.75    | 12 months     |
| Barclays BS       | 0800 000000 | Barclays Gold  | Postal  | £5,000,000,000,000,000,000  | 6.75    | 12 months     |
| Barclays BS       | 0800 000000 | Barclays Gold  | Postal  | £10,000,000,000,000,000,000 | 6.75    | 12 months     |
|                   |             |                |         |                             |         |               |

# Party time for punters

A bet on a Labour win could prove as safe as any other investment, writes Rachel Fixsen

**W**hat's the difference between investment and gambling? One is for the prudent, the other for moments of downright recklessness - right?

Perhaps, though the line between the two sometimes seems thin - especially when you find yourself stung by the plummeting price of a sure share bet.

With the ultimate "sure bet" looming in less than three weeks, why not forget serious investments for a spell and have a real flutter? Betting on a Labour victory at the general election on 1 May seems safer than some "investments" on offer.

The odds on a Labour win are short, but if you feel sure Tony Blair will be the new incumbent at 10 Downing Street, a bookie could give you a decent return on your stake.

William Hill and Ladbrokes are offering odds of 1-7 on Labour winning the most seats. This means for a stake of £7 (and 63p with betting tax at 9 per cent) a win would give you £1 plus your stake back. Taking the tax into account your return over the next three weeks would be 4.85 per cent - if Labour won. This adds up to an annual rate of return of about 84 per cent.

If you believe John Major will beat the opinion polls, as he did in 1992 and win the vote, you can get odds of 4-1 from either bookmaker. Odds of a Liberal Democrat win are 800-1.

Simon Clare, election betting manager at Ladbrokes, says all the money is going on the size of

Labour majority will be, rather than whether the party will win. "Nobody is backing any Tory majority at all," Mr Clare says.

Shortest odds - 9-2 - are being offered for a Labour majority of 81-100 seats. Some punters are betting on 221-240, where the odds are 25-1, Mr Clare says.

Serious money has already been placed though most election betting is expected nearer polling day.

"We've had £95,000 from a punter who's had a double, combining a bet that Labour will win the most seats with a bet that (Glasgow) Rangers will win the Scottish Premier Division," says William Hill spokesman Graham Sharpe. This individual stands to make a clear profit of £13,000 if her predictions come true. Bookmakers expect election betting to total £20m this year.

Spread betting is a form that sprang up 14 years ago. It packages betting into the formal City trades used to deal in stocks and was aimed at traders to begin with. City Index, Ladbrokes and William Hill Index offer spread betting with the companies.

"It started as a hobby for people who worked in the City ... but it has reached a much wider audience now," says City Index spokesman Paul Austin.

In some ways it straddles the line between betting and investing and is regulated by the Securities and Futures Association, unlike standard betting which has no official regulator.

This is how it works. In election spread betting, you bet on the size of majority you expect a certain party to win. The betting shop offers a range, or spread, representing the majority it expects the party to gain.

You then have two choices - bet the party will get above or below the range. If you bet above the range and the party wins more seats than the range suggested, you win your stake multiplied by every seat the party wins above the top of the range.

So if you bet £10 above City Index's spread for Labour's majority, which is 368-374 seats and Labour subsequently wins 400 seats in parliament you win £260. But if Labour manage only 300 seats you have to pay £680. You never hand over your stake, as clients set up credit facilities with the companies.

"A lot of these equities market issues will not be decided on election day. The Budget will and this will come some weeks later," says George Hodgson, equity strategist at SBC Warburg.

Utilities, including water, telecommunications and gas, are bound to sustain injuries if Labour's proposed windfall tax becomes law. "If Labour were to win there might be 2-3 per cent downside," says Philip Wolstenholme, equity strategist at securities house Merrill Lynch.

Over time, general tax rates and corporate tax rates would be likely to go up under Labour, says Mr Wolstenholme. This would be bad for share prices generally.

Worries that Labour might step up dividend taxation have started to niggle the markets. Analysts say these fears are groundless, but extra dividend tax would hit high-yield stocks.

A Labour win may not be bad news all round for equities. Some market players believe bus companies like National Express or Stagecoach could be winners if a Blair administration opts to back public transport. Manufacturers could benefit if corporate tax was reformed in their favour.

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We also think

# Desirable objects: instant profits

**Collect to invest:** John Windsor on how to cash in on limited editions

**S**ome of today's limited-edition collectables increase in value almost as soon as they leave the shops. Fountain pens, first-edition novels, records, CDs, telephones and trading cards and classic cars can turn a quick profit for a buyer in the know.

This year, a twin set of fountain pens called Peter and Catherine the Great is retailing for £1,300. By the end of the year it will be selling at Bonhams, the London auctioneers, for £1,600-£1,800.

There are three reasons for the premium value: the twin set is by Montblanc, German makers of the world's best-known brand of quality pens; supply is limited to 4,810 (Mont Blanc's height in metres); such special editions are annual, making them a must for fountain pen collectors wanting complete runs (this happens to be the first twin).

When, as recently as 1992, Montblanc issued its first limited edition pen, the Lorenzo de Medici, knowledgeable collectors snapped it up, sensing correctly that they were in at the start of something lucrative. At auction, even in its first year, the splendid pen sustained its £850 retail price and the year after was fetching £1,100 – a sign that the time taken for some contemporary collectables to acquire added value was shortening drastically.

They are now worth £3,000 mint and boxed in factory condition – a 350 per cent increase in five years. Subsequent Montblanc annual limited editions have earned more modest premiums but are still nice little earners: the Octavian of 1993, also £850 retail, commands £1,500-

£2,000 at auction, and is still a good investment.

Pitfalls for speculators: uneven allocation by fountain pen manufacturers, leading to premium prices in some countries and discounting in others.

Investment tip: Dunhill's first

limited edition pen, the Namiki, with lacquer designs hand-painted by named Japanese artists, issued last year in four editions of 200, prices £820 to £5,200 for a special in powdered gold. Dunhill's original Namikis of the Thirties can fetch over £5,000 at auction.

Sheer quality can yield instant profit. How's your literary discernment, for instance? In the past decade, auction prices for mint-condition first editions complete with dustwrapper of John Fowles's *The French Lieutenant's Woman* have dropped by half from their peak £400-£500.

Critical consensus has hoisted the dealers' price of first editions of Irving Walsh's 1994 paperback *Trainspotting* – only about 1,000 were printed – to £500 from its retail price of £4.99. Six months ago, before its Oscar-winning film debut, Michael Ondatje's novel *The English Patient*, could be had for £25. Now it is £300. Original retail price in 1992: £14.99.

Tip from Joanna Herald, a partner in the Ulysses bookshop in Museum Street, central London: *Silk* by Alessandro Baricco, pub-

lished by Harvill Press, still in print at £9.99 hardback, £6.99 paperback. Her recommendation is based entirely on literary merit.

When you consider that boot-collectors of the Twenties and Thirties went barmy over first editions of Galsworthy (there's nothing new in first-edition speculation), you might consider that "take the money and run" is the best strategy in those limited-edition markets in which taste is volatile.

An example is the Swatch market, deliberately exploited by its cunning and humorous creator, Nicolas Hayek. He conducts a worldwide battle of wits in which collectors' and dealers' faxes, telephones and Internet modems thrash with the latest rumours about rare, just-issued design variants worth tens of thousands of pounds, and

Hayek's capricious allocations of "specials" that rocket or plummet in value in different countries.

Joseph Falcone, who trades in Swatches from his shop in the Meridian Hotel, Piccadilly, London, tells the cautionary tale of a Scot who fought his way through the scrum at Harrods' sell-out launch of the Swatch Christmas special "Roi Soleil" in 1993, having heard that the limited allocation would instantly be worth big money. He bought two for £45 each and was gratified to see them changing hands for £150 minutes before leaving the store. He did not know that, oddly enough, the Swatch shop in Oxford Street still had plenty for sale – at £45.

Six months later, when Mr Falcone offered him £75 each for his two, he reported he had sold them for £60 each, the best price he could get. His trip from Scotland with his girlfriend had cost him £600. Dealers now sell Roi Soleils for £185-£200. The trade price is £100.

On the other hand, a Swatch col-

lector hollering in Madrid paid a mere £10 for a mint and boxed 1987 "Puff" – one of only 120 made, with blow-away rabbit fur around the dial – having spotted it in a cardboard box in a shop. He sold it that year, 1993, for £18,500. Puffs now sell for £20,000-£25,000. Moral: to play the Swatch market do lots of homework.

Records and CDs, by comparison, are child's play. John Reed, research editor of *Record Collector* magazine, which publishes the biennial *Rare Record Price Guide* (£19.95), recommends buying into indie groups' records. Their small-circulation "lo-fi" records turned out in bedrooms on four-track recorders are not sold by the big retailers and can rapidly acquire rarity value.

Lee Phelps, co-manager of

Energy, mail-order record and CD dealers of Looe, Cornwall, is selling for £50 copies of Baby Bird's CD, I Was Born A Man – issued only 18 months ago. Spice Girls? Their limited edition second CD of fancy fold-out, which retailed at £3.99, is worth £20.

Packs of glossy trading cards showing film stars and sportsmen include sparsely distributed "chase" cards that instantly acquire street value. Like Swatches, they are an example of managed rarity. A 3D double-size Pamela Anderson "case topper" card – one per case of 360 packs – is worth £50-£60 to collectors.

Most poignant case topper, according to the publisher-importer Barry Roness, personally signed Playboy cards of Ernest Hemingway's granddaughter Margaux

Hemingway, model and actress. She was found dead in Los Angeles last July after suffering from bulimia and alcoholism. The card has become a cult collectable. Now worth \$500, it is expected to be changing hands for \$2,000 in a year's time.

You can easily discover which brand-new classic cars can be sold for instant profit by comparing newspaper car ad prices with manufacturers' list prices. The new Mercedes-Benz SLK, for example, which retails for £30,000, immediately commands a secondhand price of £40,000. The snag is that to get one you have to join the two-year waiting list that is responsible for the inflated price. What price an SLK in two years?

Bonhams' next fountain pen sale, 9 May (11am). Montblanc 0181-232 3000; Alfred Dunhill 0171-290 8600; Ulysse 0171-831 1600; Barry Roness 0181-871 2997; Record Collector 0181-579 1082; Lee Phelps, Energy 01503-265515.



## A first edition of 'Trainspotting' has soared from £4.99 to £500!

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TO FIND OUT WHAT'S ON TV, WHERE TO GO AND WHEN, READ TODAY'S

Serena Mackesy  
In my week

The one thing to be said for an election is that it gives you the chance to find someone new to hate. I'm quite looking forward to it

**E**lection fever is gripping so loosely I think it might drop me altogether. Everyone seems subject to the same affliction. I haven't met anyone who can recall having had a conversation about politics in the last month. There's only so much mileage you can milk from a discussion that basically follows this pattern: "Who do you think you'll be voting for?" "Dunno, but I hate the Tories." "Me too." Eighteen years is about as far as you can string it out, though I know a number of people who have managed to stretch a loathing of socialism all the way to the half century.

The one thing to be said for an election is that it gives you the chance to find someone new to hate. I'm quite looking forward to it

I only wish someone would tell the pollsters. A day doesn't go by without the phone ringing with requests for my random opinion. The best came from the highly respected Fax Polling Associates at eight o'clock on Sunday morning. "The Referendum on Europe," announced a tinted header. Below were two boxes marked "Stay in" and "Get out", and a pair of 0331 numbers. "Please make copies of this form for everybody who wishes to express an opinion in your office," it said. Seems the Society for the Promotion of a European Referendum (302 Regent Street, if you want to drop in and ask for a refund on your fax paper), wants to determine the democratic wishes of the British people. Calls to 0331 numbers, by the way, cost £1 per minute. Can't wait for the results when they publish them "as widely as possible" before the election: "Several thousand complete mugs think we should get out of Europe."

And gave us their names and addresses as well."

Gallipoli were on the phone on Tuesday, wanting to know in whose hands I thought inflation was safest and who I thought would make the best Prime Minister. The option "me" didn't seem to be available. As a conscientious voter, I

Ant has a bit of a crush on Mordechai, ever since she claims to have heard him sing a song called "Sephardi So Good" on Spectrum Radio. There's nothing like a good pun to get a girl's heart racing. The news that the Great One was coming to the shores of North London sent her up to 60 a day and at least three phone calls an hour. The temptation of an evening's relief from the Hair of Baal was too powerful. We bought the last two tickets on the face of the planet.

Twenty-five pounds well spent. You can keep your salsa: no one can call themselves a true Global Kid until they've bounced around while a man, with a two-foot beard and a dark suit, heads-and-toes beneath a laser show of spectacular garnishness. The crowd was in ecstasies. Polite ecstasies. Being a kid of the punk generation, I have never been at a pop concert before where everyone turned round and said "Excuse me" to the people behind them before they took to their seat. As Mordechai jiggled his way to the end of an anthem, a boy group, decked out in white shirts and dark trousers took it up and carried it on for a full two minutes, Nick Hornby style. "I don't know why," said Mordechai, "people say that London is a quiet town these days."

Not everyone, it seems, has a subscription to *Vanity Fair*. It's the fault of Mordechai ben David. Thanks to Mordechai, there was a gathering at Wembley, with more wigs in evidence than at Elton John's birthday party. They bobbed and jiggled, they gorged popcorn and chocolate-flavoured wafer biscuits in the lobby, they watched nervously as their sons broke the strict, no-fun rules imposed by the Wembley management and leapt from their seats to dance. And the arresting thing was that, in striking contrast to your average showbiz gathering, the wigs were attached to women. Mordechai ben David, you see, is the King of Hassidic music.

We rehearsed foot movements all the way across the car park and treated the darkened streets of Willesden to a full-blown taster of the double album. Back down south, we stopped at a 7-Eleven for more nicotine, and a woman with a clipboard approached. "Excuse me," she said, "can I ask you a few questions about how you're going to vote in the election?" Her hair was nylon red, with rock-hard strands trained over her forehead. Ant settled down to talk about the Tories, while I walked around the back to see if I could spot a seam.

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